



SHIPMATES

MARY T. WAGGAMAN



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SHIPMATES

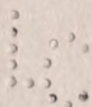


A strong arm was flung around him—a stronger hand than his caught the helm.—*Page 142.*

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BY

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MARY T. WAGGAMAN



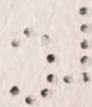
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SHIPMATES

CHAPTER I

PIP

IT WAS very hot. The July sun, that was calling all things into life, growth and bloom in field and forest, was blazing down fiercely in the great city as if angered at the huge piles of brick and stone and steel that rose so defiantly against his midsummer sway.

The afternoon beams fell through the half-closed shutters of a modest apartment where a delicate boy of about twelve was propped up in an invalid chair, close to the window, where he might catch a wandering breath of air. He was languidly drawing on a slate for the little sister leaning against his knee.

"There is your ship, Tot," he said, as his thin fingers put the last touch to his work. "Full sail, all flags flying, and—

off"—there was a wistful note in his voice —“off to sea.”

“Oh, Pip, no! That isn’t a right ship at all,” said his small critic disapprovingly. “There ought to be smoke puffing, and a railing with little girls behind it, and two teachers with parasols. And lots, oh, *lots* of bananas and cake and ice cream. I want a ’scursion ship, Pip.”

“I’m afraid I can’t draw an excursion ship, Tot.” Pip’s fair head, with its fine crop of short curls, sank back wearily on his pillow. “I’m tired now.”

“You’re mean,” pouted Tot, who was a rosy, chubby little person of five. “You’re not tired a bit. You haven’t been to school or done anything all day, Pip, and I’ve been to the kindergarten, marching and singing, and ‘ringing around rosy,’ and making clay forts, and ’broidering blue elephants, and I ain’t tired a bit.”

“No,” said Pip (or, as the baptismal register proclaimed him, Philip Penrose Parker), “I don’t believe you were ever tired in your life. Stand up, Tot, won’t

you? I feel as if you weighed about five hundred pounds leaning on my knee. And I'm not—not very strong yet," he added with a little gasp, as Tot relieved the pressure somewhat by dropping on the hassock at his feet.

"Is it bad not to be strong, Pip?" she asked with sudden solemnity.

"Oh, not very bad," he answered cheerfully.

"Because when the doctor told Milly that she cried," said Tot, looking up into his face.

"Cried!" echoed Pip. "Milly cried! Milly—about me?"

"Yes," Tot nodded with the terrible truthfulness of her years, "about you." Because we haven't any money and can't go way out of the hot—and you'll have to die like poor Papa——"

"Die!" said Pip in a startled voice, "Die! Did Milly say I was going to die, Tot?"

An old woman just coming into the room with a glass of milk caught the sharp, strained question.

"Die, is it? Die, darling! What sort of foolish talk is that?"

"Oh, Judy!" Pip turned a pair of starry eyes wide with dismay on the newcomer. "Tot says Milly was crying about me. *Crying!* About me, Judy, because—because I am going—to *die*."

"Die!" repeated Judy with a cackling laugh that her tender eyes belied. "Die, indeed! Where did the child pick up such nonsense. Die! Much ye look like it now. I wonder at ye, lad, to be minding the talk of a babbling babe like Tot."

"Milly said," persisted Tot with funereal gravity, "that if we didn't get out of the hot Pip wouldn't ever——"

"Hush now," interrupted Judy quickly. "Isn't that the organ-man I hear below? Him with the monkey in the red cap? You'll find a nickel in the cracked tea-cup to make friends with him. Off with ye quick now to stop him or he'll be gone."

"Oh, yes, yes." Tot sprang up gleefully. "You take care of Pip now, Judy."

And she was out of the room in a bound.

“And it’s a grand caretaker you are,” laughed the old woman grimly as she put the glass of milk into Pip’s thin, shaking hand. “She’ll not get in to ye again, lad, this evening with her picturing and her monkey chatter; but, what sense can we look for in a five-year-old? I’ll draw the shutter to keep out the sun and ye can lie back and rest till Milly comes back from her school. Won’t you finish the sup of milk, darling?”

“No,” said Pip, putting the glass aside; “I can’t, Judy. It don’t—don’t taste good any more. I’m tired of milk—tired of—of everyt’ing. I’ll just shut my eyes and rest.”

Judy took the glass and stood looking for a moment at the pale young face, the closed waxen lids, with a dull pang of foreboding; then, drawing down the blinds softly, she stole out of the room and back to her ironing, whilst big tears dropped from her dim old eyes onto the fluffy ruffles of Miss Tot’s best muslin

frock, for of all the nurslings to whom she had clung through fortune and misfortune, Pip held the warmest and deepest place in her faithful heart—the bold, brave, little lad—who seemed fading slowly but surely away.

He lay back in his cushioned chair, feeling very tired, indeed. It seemed to him he was growing more tired every day—not sick—oh, not at all! He had been quite well for two or three months now, but just tired all the time. And the days were so long and bright and hot now—and the nights so close and breathless in these little rooms where no breeze ever came, night or day. Milly, darling Milly, often sat beside his chair and fanned him for hours; but a “fan” breeze was not at all like the real thing, and, then, it was a little hard on Milly to sit up and fan a fellow after she had been teaching in a close school room all day.

Oh! how hot it was! Pip’s head turned restlessly on his pillow. How very tired he was—but not sick, oh, not at all! Milly

could not have been crying about him because he was "tired." Tot had it wrong—no one thought he was going to die. And then a sudden remembrance of his small sister's keen eyes and quick ears made him doubt again. If Milly had been crying about him indeed! If he were never going to be real strong again, like other boys—if—if—he were going to—*die*. A big fly humming by the closed shutters seemed to drone the word into his ear—*die! die! die!* He started up on his pillow panting—all a-tremble with a chilling fear, when suddenly the organ in the street below that had been grinding rather dolefully a German waltz, burst into the rollicking strains of "Nancy Lee," and the "Sailor Song" that the big boys of the boat club at St. John's School had adapted to the music, seemed to break in upon the fancied whisper of doom:

Oh, a sailor's life, it is the life for me,

Yo ho, my lads, yo ho!

With swelling sail to rove the wide blue sea,

Heave ho, my lads, heave ho!

As the spirited if somewhat squeaky notes rose from below they seemed to bear a glad, stirring breath like the puff of salt wind in the sails of the ship he had drawn for Tot half an hour ago.

He sank back again on his pillow, his fluttering pulse steadying to the cheery beat of the music:

Oh, a sailor's life, it is the life for me,

Yo ho, my lads, yo ho!

With swelling sail to rove the deep blue sea,

With swelling—with swelling—sail—
with—swelling—sail——

With the red-capped monkey clutching Tot's nickel, the organ was wheezing away in the distance, but its work was done; the notes of "Nancy Lee" fell on an unconscious ear. Pip had been—soothed asleep.

On the sidewalk below Miss Tot was still twirling on her chubby legs to the music of the vanishing organ, when she felt a light touch upon her shoulder that made her pause. Her older sister, who

did not approve of street ballets even for young ladies of five, was looking down on her with reproachful eyes—very lovely eyes they were, with a starry gleam like Pip's hiding in the violet depths that were fringed with long dark lashes. But the fair face they lit was pale and a trifle worn. These are hard dull ways that steal the bloom even from two and twenty, and Mildred Parker had trodden them bravely and lovingly since she was eighteen, when her orphaned sister and brother had been left in her tender care.

"Oh, Tot, darling, what are you doing out here? The sun is so hot yet and——"

"Judy sent me," said Tot with the confidence of the right-doer. "I was taking care of Pip real good and Judy gave me a nickel for the monkey and told me to come out."

"Is—is Pip worse?" asked Milly, casting a frightened glance at the closed shutters high above her.

"Yes," replied Tot, feeling it was wise to add to the importance of the situation.

"I guess he is worse. He was too tired even to draw a 'scursion ship. I drew a whole house this morning with a chimney and a front door, and I'm only five."

The captured Tot was dancing by her sister's side now up the apartment stair (elevators being luxuries beyond the Parker's rent).

"Oh, I'm afraid you've been bothering your poor sick brother, Tot," said Milly, anxiously.

"No, I haven't; I haven't bothered him one bit," was the much aggrieved reply. "I got him a drink of water and fished the fly out of the glass so he could drink it and I stood by his chair real quiet and let him draw on my slate. And I told him how you cried all night 'cause you couldn't take him out of the hot——"

"Told him I cried all night!" Milly paused in dismay on the landing. "Oh, Tot, how did you know?"

"I waked up," said the small eavesdropper frankly. "I felt the wet on the pillow. I heard you tell the Doctor you were

afraid Pip was going to die, like Papa."

"And—and—you told him that, too," gasped Milly in horror. "Oh, you dreadful, dreadful—baby!" she added, the angry flame dying out of her eyes as she met the bewildered look in the innocent upturned face. "No wonder Judy turned you out, no wonder the poor dear boy is worse this evening—no wonder—Oh!—I must see to him right away. Tot, dearie, there is Daisy Bell watching for you," said the anxious girl as she descried the little neighbor in the next apartment peeping through her open door.

"Run and play with her until I call you, pet."

The unconscious little mischief-maker darted gleefully away, while Milly hurried in with a beating heart to see what harm had been done to her darling boy.

But Judy met her in the little hall with uplifted finger.

"Hush, hush, darling! Don't be disturbing him. I've just been in to take a look at him. He is sleeping like a babe."

Milly slipped into Judy's tiny kitchen and closed the door.

"Oh, Judy, Judy!" she murmured with a choked sob as she dropped trembling into the one chair, "what has happened? What did Tot tell him, Judy?"

"A deal more than it was good for him to know," answered the old woman with a nod. "Ah, but he has the bold brave heart, the darling lad, though he was sore frightened, as I could see, at the little magpie's chatter about dying like his poor father died."

"Oh, Judy! How did Tot ever hear that?" asked Milly despairingly. "She was at the other end of the room playing with her doll when I told the doctor what I feared, and he said that Pip was failing indeed—and—and—" the sweet voice broke in a sob——

"And it doesn't take a doctor's eye to see that," assented Judy. "He's fading away like the snow wreath at the touch of the sun. It's the heat, darling, this murdering American heat. The first year

I was out of the old country it was near killing me. I'd wake in the burning nights panting for the breath of the sea, the soft drip of the Irish rain. If we could get the lad off to old Ireland he would bloom out again like the flowers in May."

"But we can't," replied Milly tremulously. "We can't go away with him anywhere, and I can't send him away with strangers, Judy, to—die—perhaps."

"Ah, no, no, no! You couldn't, darling, you couldn't, I know. I wouldn't rest a night myself with the little lad out of my sight and reach. But isn't there some bit of a place where we could all go together when the school breaks up next week—some nice, quiet place where he could get a breath of the strong salt air?"

"Oh if he could—if he could—but, Judy, we can't, *can't* afford it," faltered Milly hopelessly. "There were the doctor's bill and the druggist's bill to pay, and the nurse while he was so very sick. And our little flat is leased by the year, and we have to pay the rent. I've done

my best, Judy, but—but——” Milly buried her face in her hands and sobbed outright.

“God knows ye have, darling; an angel from the skies could do no more,” said the old woman tenderly. “Listen now to what I tell ye. I’ve a bit of money that I’ve saved for my burying——”

“I won’t touch it!” said Milly passionately.

“Wait now till ye hear,” continued Judy. “I’ve got the life and strength in me for many a day yet, and, if I hadn’t what call has an old woman to be thinking of her burying when there’s a lad like that pining for the breath of life? And what good would the price of a silk-cushioned coffin be to me if he was gone? Now, don’t be saying a word.”

From the depths of a capacious pocket Judy brought out a bank book. “There’s two hundred dollars in that as good as gold. Take it, darling, and save my little lad.”

“Oh, Judy, Judy, I can’t!” sobbed

Milly. "After you have been working and striving all these years—to take your little all!"

"And it will be the mortal sin of anger that will rise in me, if ye talk like that," said Judy, her withered face kindling. "There, he is waking now; he is calling. Go in to him—look at him, at his eyes shining like stars, and the white lily of his cheek, and the tremble of his hands like wings fluttering before they fly. Go look at him and say whether you'll keep him here, or let him go."

But Judy's indignant outburst was lost in empty air. Milly had already flown to her little brother's side. He had started up from his pillow with the flushed cheeks and starry eyes that always made her loving heart sink.

"You called, darling?" she asked.

"Did I?" he said with a little laugh as he fell back among his pillows. "I was dreaming, Milly, the finest kind of a dream. I was out in a boat with the breeze blowing, and the waves dancing, and the

sails swelling in the wind. And I was singing the song the boys used to sing at St. John's:

A sailor's life, it is the life for me!

Yo ho, my lads, yo ho!

"Ah, it was a nice dream," repeated Pip with a little low, weak laugh. "I'm sorry I woke up."

"Go to sleep and dream it over again, then," said his sister, smoothing his brow with a tender hand.

"Oh, I can't!" he sighed softly. "You can't dream the same thing twice. But it was a great dream. It seemed as if I could almost sniff the salt breeze. You see I've been drawing ship pictures for Tot, and then the organ man came along and played 'Nancy Lee,' and—and I've always liked sea pictures and sea stories. I suppose it's the old grandad in me coming out. Get me a glass of cool water, won't you, Milly? It's *so* hot."

Milly got the water, noting with a pang at her tender heart how the wasted hand

that took the glass trembled, as Judy had said, like a young wing fluttering for flight."

"I'll move your chair, darling, and open the shutter so that you can get some air."

"The air is hot too," he said wearily. "If I could get just a puff of that breeze I was dreaming about—just one puff. Why, I could feel it, Milly, lifting my hair and blowing on my cheeks and chirking me up straight through. Now I'm all down and out again, all down and out, Milly." The young voice took a sudden new tone. "What is the matter with me, anyhow?"

"You're weak still, darling—weak and a little feverish sometimes. You were very sick last winter, you know, and it takes some time to get quite well."

"Will I ever get quite—*quite* well?" asked Pip seriously.

"Why, what a foolish, foolish question," laughed Milly out of her breaking heart. "Of course you will get well," and as she gave the cheering promise there came to

the tender speaker an anguished thought of that Home where all are well indeed. "You're tired and hot this evening, and I don't wonder. Shut your eyes and I'll fan you into another sea-dream."

And Milly sat and fanned until Pip drifted off again from the weakness and weariness of earth into a dream world of rest. Then his sister rose, stole softly from the room, and burst tempestuously into the kitchen.

"Oh, Judy, darling, you're right, you're right!" she sobbed, flinging her soft young arms about the old woman's neck. "We must take your money and go, oh, I don't know where or how, but we must go away and save him, Judy, save our Pip."

CHAPTER II

A FLIGHT FOR LIFE

IT WAS a thrilling week that followed this decision. Pip was roused into feverish excitement, Tot talked ships and "'scursion boats" in his sleep, even Judy was all a-tremble, as she said, to be off. But the "little place" for which Milly was scanning advertising columns and scouring real estate offices was still beyond their reach. It was the height of the season, and the wide stretches of wave-washed shore were peopled with pleasure seekers. All places that were not already taken were too far or too costly for their slender means.

When the freckle-nosed boy in the great office of Raynor and Raynor whirled around on his stool to face Milly for the fourth time he jumped alertly to his feet. "We've something on this morning, miss—a sublet."

"Oh, where?" was the eager question.

"Down on the Virginia shore, miss; Carter's Cove they call it. Four-room shack, full furnished, spring cots, screens, porch all around, hunting, fishing, boating; \$100 for the sublease," rattled off the speaker as in business duty bound; then dropping his voice to a lower tone, he added: "But don't you be gulled into taking it, miss. I'm letting you in. Don't take it for nothing, miss."

"Oh, why—*why* not?" asked Milly.

"T'other family moved out in a week after paying season's rent in advance," went on this freckle-faced friend in cautious warning. "Said they'd rather be on a cannibal island at once. Wild and lonely ain't no name for it; might do for a lot of hunters, but you best let it alone. Nothing but fishermen and oystermen around—not a respectable family within five miles."

"Oh, I don't care for that at all," said the young lady desperately. "Is it healthy, do you think?"

"Healthy!" chuckled Freckle-face, "with the whole wide Atlantic stretching before you! Lord, miss, nobody dies down there unless they're drowned or killed in a fight. There ain't nothing to die with—it all blows away."

"And a hundred dollars for the season, you say. I'll take it," said Milly recklessly, and as she thought of the wan little face by the burning heat of the window she drew out her pocket-book. "I'll take it now and here."

"You will!" gasped Freckle-face in honest dismay; but before he could voice further warning a dapper young gentleman who had caught the young lady's decisive word stepped promptly up to close the bargain, and the deed was done. One hundred dollars of the "burying money" was paid down at once, and the "little shack" at Carter's Cove, with its doubtful surroundings was rented for the season, and Milly was tripping joyously back to Pip with the signed "agreement" in her hand.

Scarcely had her dainty white skirt fluttered out of the office when a big brown and very broad-shouldered young gentleman sauntered lazily in. "Strike that shack of mine off your list, will you, please?" he said, flicking the ash off a monogrammed cigar. "I want it myself."

There was a momentary pause of dismay. Evidently this broad-shouldered young gentleman was a person of some importance.

"Awful sorry, Mr. Robert, but we've just rented it," said the dapper clerk apologetically.

"Rented it!" echoed the young gentleman; "rented it! Why, you told me the people had thrown up their lease only last night."

"I know, sir, but we rented it this morning—not half an hour ago!"

"Thunderation!" Mr. Robert Livingston Raynor, millionaire master of this and a score of other big offices, flung away his half-burned cigar with the fierce impa-

tience of one unused to contradiction.

"Who has taken it?"

"A young lady, sir."

"A young lady! A young *lady*! Why, what in the name of all that is idiotic would take a young lady to Carter's Cove? Did you tell her what sort of a place it is?"

"I did, sir," piped up Freckle-face, feeling here was his chance to make a strike. "I told her how it was wild and lonely, with only oyster men and fisher folk around, and no 'spectable family anywhere near. I told her all, sir, but she didn't care. She has a sick brother, she says, and he has got to go to the seashore, and she could not pay very much rent."

"Oh, she couldn't," said Mr. Robert drily. "I see. It was the cheap rent, then, that caught her. Maybe we can fix that. Write to her. Daly," he turned to the rent clerk, "you've got her address. Offer her \$100 bonus if she will give up the lease—\$100 cash down. I'm dead sick of

things about here and want to be out in the wilds again, so get me my shack."

"I'll try, sir," answered Daly. "A hundred dollars bonus ought to do it. But it seems to me you could find pleasanter wilds than Carter's Cove."

"Perhaps," said the gentleman, lighting another cigar. "Still, I've tried most places—Europe, Asia, Africa, China, Japan—all pretty much the same. Everybody salaaming, bootlicking for my shekels. They're a dull set of savages at the Cove, if I remember right, and as I have not been there for four or five years, they won't either know or care for me, so get me my shack. I'll go off there and be a savage with the rest."

There was rapturous preparation at the Parker's little flat. Milly had come home to find Pip lying so faint and weak by the breathless window that she decided there must be no delay. Her school work was done, the place secured. They must leave in the boat to-night. The sick boy roused

into new life and strength at the very thought."

Tot was dancing about with her doll "Polly Flinders" under her arm in a state of wild excitement. "Polly Flinders'" stout rag body and leather legs had survived the vicissitudes of doll life that had already cost her two heads. She was wearing her third now, fastened on by Judy a trifle askew, but very gay with a yellow wig and pink hair ribbon.

"Oh, I'm going boating, too, can't I, Milly? Daisy Bell goes a-boating. She has an uncle that is a pirate."

"Oh, not a pirate, Tot," laughed Pip.

"Yes, a pirate. I guess Daisy Bell is my best friend and wouldn't tell me stories. He has a nice boat all his own and he is a real good uncle, and gave Daisy Bell a gold neck chain. "Will there be any pirates where we are, Pip?"

"I guess not," answered Pip, who was sipping a bowl of chicken broth with new appetite already. "But there will be boats, Tot, and great stretches of sand to

run and play in, and waves rolling up where we can wade and splash. I can almost hear them now; and the breeze, the cool, cool breeze blowing in from the wide sea, and the blue sky stretching everywhere, with no walls or roofs to shut it out. Oh, Tottie, it seems most too good to be true. I didn't think Milly would ever get a fine place like this."

And Milly, bending over the little trunk she was packing, listened to the happy chatter with a glad beat in her heart. What or where Carter's Cove might be she did not know or care; as long as it held health and hope and life for Pip she asked nothing more.

"There, I've got everything in," she said, lifting her pretty flushed face. "And there's room for the fishing rod and your air-gun, Pip. What is it, Judy? A letter, you say, a letter for me?"

"The boy is waiting without for an answer," said Judy, presenting a business-like envelope.

Milly tore it open nervously and scanned the contents.

"I won't do it," she burst forth passionately. "I won't, I won't."

"You won't do what, darling?" asked Judy in bewilderment.

"Give up my lease—give up the place—give up Pip's health and life—for one hundred dollars," cried Milly, her soft eyes flashing.

"Sure we won't, we won't, darling. Who's asking it?"

"Mr. Raynor," said Milly, her sweet voice trembling. "Mr. Robert L. Raynor, the great, rich, mighty Mr. Robert Raynor, who can pay for anything, who has the whole wide world to choose from, wants the one poor little place his clerks have rented to me."

And Milly's soft eyes flamed with indignation; she did not stop to think that this unknown millionaire's offer might put other places than Carter's Cove within her reach; she only felt that his selfish whim would keep her fast-failing boy longer in

this deadly heat—rob him of his one feeble chance of health and life.

So it was a flushed, breathless, very determined young lady that burst into the little sitting-room where Freckle-face waited, appraising the situation and deciding that Mr. Robert's one hundred dollars would be taken "in a jump."

"You brought me this letter," said Milly briefly. "You can take my answer back in one word. It is no! Simply and decidedly *no!*"

"No. Freckle-face stared. "You won't give up the lease—not for a hundred dollars?"

"Not for a hundred—not for five hundred," was the impetuous answer. "It means life or death to my little brother to get to the seashore at once. We leave for Carter's Cove to-night."

CHAPTER III

A FLITTING

AND they left as Milly decreed. It was a cheering flitting for the *Ocean Queen* was making an excursion trip down the coast with a gay crowd of pleasure-seekers.

With flags flying and band playing her engines beat their swift way out into dark-blue depths of distance where earth vanished and there was only swelling waves and starlit sky.

Stretched out comfortably on his steamer chair, the soft rug Milly had brought for him tucked around his knees, the cool wind fanning his cheeks and lifting his hair, Pip listened to the merry, chattering voices, the pulsing music, feeling as if it were all some delightful dream, a dream that followed him down to the stateroom, where the little window stood open over his berth. The salt breeze swept in un-

challenged and the stars looked down on him as, with a new drowsiness unknown for weeks, he fell asleep over his half-said prayers.

In the first flush of the summer morning they reached Winston's wharf, the nearest point to their destination in the steamer's route. There, as the captain had informed Milly, she could hire a little sailboat that would take them the dozen miles or so to the Cove. They found old Uncle Tobe, a "befo'-de-wah" darkey, waiting for the job, and through a light veil of lifting fog they drifted in his little fishing boat to their unknown home.

The sea was all a-shimmer with rose and gold, the breeze that puffed Uncle Tobe's ragged sail had a tonic in its briny breath that no chemist could bottle. Pip, who had eaten an early breakfast on the steamboat with astonishing relish, sat up against a coil of rope without pillow or prop.

"Youse all gwine ter *stay* at Carter's Cove?" questioned Uncle Tobe.

"Yes, all summer—three whole months," answered Pip cheerily.

"Mouty lonesomeish 'long dar," said the old man with a nod.

"Oh, we don't mind that," was the bright answer.

"Mouty roughish, too," continued Uncle Tobe. "De waters bile outen dat Cove bad as round de Capes when dar's a storm."

"But we won't go out in the storms," laughed Pip undismayed.

"And dem ister men," went on Uncle Tobe, "is de worstest for fighting and killing 'long dis coast."

"Oh, but they won't fight us, I am sure," said Pip.

"Mebbe they won't," said Uncle Tobe, surveying his passengers dubiously; "but you bes' keep clar ob 'em, chile, you bes' keep clar ob dem ister folks, shurely."

"What are ye croaking about, ye old black crow, ye?" said Judy. "The Holy Mother is watching over us and will keep

us from all harm. Though it's the wild desert of a place, God knows."

For the lifting mists showed them a shore bare and desolate indeed; wide sandy beaches on which, save for the dipping wing of some sea bird, there was no sign of life; long, low reefs jutting out into the leaping waves, lines of yellow sand dunes gleaming in the morning sun. No green or growing thing in sight, only the barren beach and the wide-stretching sea.

Then suddenly through the breaking fog there came the clear, sweet stroke of a bell. "Camp Zavery," said old Tobe, his dull face brightening at the sound.

"Dat means good luck for dis niggah; I shuah kin sell all de watermillions and canterlupes I gets from up de shore now. Camp Zavery open dis year, hi-ye-ye!"

"What—where is Camp Zavery?" asked Pip eagerly. But there was no need of an answer, for the little sailboat rounded a jutting reef as he spoke and Camp Zavery burst into view—a dozen

tents dotting the sandy shore. Above a central marquee rose a rudely constructed belfry, whose crowning cross blazed in the morning sun, while from a flagstaff further out on the beach fluttered the Stars and Stripes in friendly unison with a blue and white banner bearing the inscription "Camp Xavier, Summer Boys' Brigade, No. 1."

"Camp Xavier—*Xavier*," said Milly. "It's Catholic, then. And oh, listen, listen! They are all in the big tent singing."

"Yes, 'um," answered Tobe, nodding, "dey sings morning and ebening rig'lar, sings and prays. But arter dat," the old man chuckled, "arter dat dem boys sees de fun shuah. Boating, fishing, ball playing, swimming, dar ain't nuffin dem Camp Zavery boys ain't at de long day troo."

"Oh, can't we stop?" asked Pip, quite a-tremble with eagerness. "Can't we stop here just a little while, Milly? I'd like to see some of the fun, too."

"Not now, darling, not now," was the

gentle rejoinder. "We must get in to Carter's Cove. Some day when you are stronger you can come back with Uncle Tobe. It is not very much further now, is it?" she asked the old man.

"Good five miles, missy," was the old man's reply. "A good long five miles, but we've cotched de wind now and we'll get dar soon."

And with the "cotched" wind in the ragged sail the little boat swept away from the singing voices and chiming bell of Camp Xavier into the vast, silent spaces of sand and sea again. Tot, unused to such early rising, had fallen asleep with her curly head in Judy's lap and "Polly Flinders" tightly clasped in a chubby arm, but there was not a wink in Pip's eyes now.

That brief glimpse of Camp Xavier had quickened every boyish instinct into new life. Uncle Tobe, half dozing at his helm, was pumped mercilessly.

"How many boys were at de camp he didn't know—'spec' about twenty or

forty; dey come from de town and de school and dar was teachers along wif dem—teachers wot dey called fathers and brothers, and Uncle Tobe's old woman had been dar one summer helping to cook, and said they had fine eatings—watermillions, canterlupes, peaches by the boatload, cornbread and chickens, clam bakes and fish fries—everything good." Uncle Tobe, quite warmed up by the glories of Camp Zavery, talked on until the bare, desolate coast suddenly took an inward curve, and there, sheltered by a ridge of high sand dunes, stood a broad, low-roofed little house that with its red-peaked roof, stretching out on all sides, to shelter a wide porch, its dormer windows blinking in the sunlight, its pillars and balustrade of rough-barked pines, looked like a big toy dropped on these wild wastes by a heedless child.

"Dar's your place, miss," said old Tobe, turning his boat to a very small wharf that jutted out from the low, smooth stretch of sand.

There was a general exclamation of delight from his passengers. Even Tot started up from her nap to rub her eyes and stare.

"Ah, but it's pretty," said Pip. "Nobody could want a nicer place than that."

"Nice nuff, for shuah," said Uncle Tobe grimly. "Pooty nuff, too, wif de sun shining and de sea laughing, but wait till de night draps and de storm rides and de sea biles. Dar ain't nuffin' nice or pooty 'bout dis place den."

But the old man's warning words fell lightly even on Milly's ears. As the boat was "hitched" to the wharf and they all stepped out on the sunlit sands, with their new home flashing gay welcome from every one of its quaint little windows. No rough streets to cross, no high stairs to climb here. With only Milly's slight arm about his waist for support, Pip took his way easily over the smooth, shelving beach to the house. And what a surprising little house it was that opened to the touch of Milly's key! If we must confess the truth,

that young lady's brave, loving heart had been sinking steadily for the last two hours as Uncle Tobe's ragged sail had swept her little flock along the wild stretches of this unknown shore.

She had expected she scarcely knew what—some rude, wretched little cabin like those she had caught glimpses of here and there as they passed, but nothing, oh, nothing like this! Polished floors and soft hued rugs, sea-green walls hung with charcoal and pencil sketches, a wide stone chimney-place that could fill the whole house with warmth and glow, long, low bookcases, big, soft-cushioned chairs, a great couch heaped high with gay pillows.

The snug little kitchen behind was complete in every detail, the woodshed had been filled by the late occupants, who had taken such hurried flight, the two little bedrooms with their spring cots were all in the trim nautical order of a well-kept ship.

Uncle Tobe brought up the trunks that had been part of the *Sally Ann's* cargo,

kindled a fire in the kitchen stove, peered up the great chimney to see that it was all "clar," and with the cheering remark that you couldn't hire him for no money to lib at dis Cove, started on his homeward voyage. As Milly stood on the porch watching the ragged sail dip out of sight, the one glimpse of life on the wide stretch of sea and shore, she felt they were alone indeed, as alone as if they were on the "desert isle" of song and story. But she had no reason to repent her bold venture. In two days Pip was already on his feet, in three he was "circumnavigating" the porch unaided, in six he was down on the beach, with a pile of cushions to rest on when there was need, but quite equal to taking a share in Miss Tot's tours of investigation.

"Oh, Pip, Pip, look at that funny thing going sideways. Is that a fish or an oyster, Pip?"

"No, goosie, it's a crab," laughed Pip. "And look out or it will nip you."

"Oh, it's got a mouth in its leg. I never

knew anything had a mouth in its leg. I wish Daisy Bell could see it, 'cause she won't believe it when I tell her, I know. Couldn't we catch it and put it in a cage and take it home, Pip?"

"We'll see; we're not going home for a long time yet," said Pip with a full-drawn breath of the briny air. "Not for a long time—three whole months."

"Oh, I don't want to stay here three whole months," said Tot in quick dismay.

"Why not? It's a grand place, Tot. Just look there at the blue water stretching far—far as you can see, and the waves foaming and flashing; just feel that breeze; we haven't anything like this in town; this is the finest thing you and I ever struck, Tot."

"No, it isn't; it isn't fine at all. There isn't any ice cream or soda water. The man at the corner used to give me a nice little glass of soda water every day to say seven times seven for him, and there isn't any organ-man or monkey, and Daisy Bell will be gone to her pirate uncle when

I go back, and I'll never see her any more unless she is grown up and married, and Polly Flinders has got a crack in her head that Milly can't sew up. Poor Polly, she has to wear a lace cap all the time now to keep her head together, for she can't get a new one down here."

"And we haven't fished a bit," continued Miss Tot, seized with another grievance; "you said we were going to catch fish fries every morning for breakfast, and we have had ham and eggs every day."

"We'll fish right now, then," said Pip, realizing with boyish good nature that things might be dull for a lively young person like Tot. "Let me see; Milly said you must not go out on the wharf, for you'd surely tumble off into the water, and it's too shallow here on the beach. If you'll promise to keep right still, Tot, we'll go sit on that old rowboat that is tied up to the wharf, and you can fish all you want."

"Oh, I will, I will," agreed Tot gleefully. "I will sit still as a mouse."

The simple needfuls were soon procured—a string, a bent pin, a bit of crooked stick from the beach, a scrap of meat to be picked up for bait.

Milly was busy in the little kitchen "doing up" some dainty frills and laces, while Judy managed the heavier work; the soft voices of the children came through the open doorway, the sun was shining, a light breeze blowing, the ocean pulsing gently with an outgoing tide. All seemed safe and calm.

The old flat-bottomed rowboat swinging lazily at its rope was not six feet from the shore. A rotten log fallen from the little wharf bridged the gap, and the young adventurers were soon happily settled in the roomy stern, Pip with two leathern pillows on which he could comfortably nestle, for fishing, even with his papa's rod and line, he had found was as yet beyond his returning strength.

But it was serious business to Miss Tot.

Even Polly Flinders with her precarious head was allowed to slip unmolested to the bottom of the boat, while the small fisherman bent all her energies to the management of stick and pin and line.

“Oh, I’ve got one now! I’ve got one! It’s pulling the string!” was the excited cry every two minutes, as twigs and sea weeds and bits of drift of every kind were drawn up with equal delight, while Pip, leaning back on his pillows, with the breeze lifting his hair, the gentle swell of the waves rocking the boat, listened to Tot’s baby chatter until it sank into an unmeaning murmur—and he drifted off, as he often did in these days of returning health, into a pleasant dream.

A great white-winged ship was bearing him over a swelling sea, the sailors were singing as they unfurled the sails, swinging the white and blue pennants to the breeze:

Oh, a sailor’s life, it is the life for me,
Yo ho, my lads, yo ho!
With swelling sail to——

“Pip! Pip!” a shrill little cry broke in upon the old ditty. “Stop the boat, Pip; it’s running away! Stop it! Quick! Quick!”

Pip started up from his dream, glanced around in bewilderment, caught his small sister by the shoulder as he cried out: “Sit—sit still, Tot; we’re off, indeed! The rope—where—how—what did you do?”

“I throwed it out,” said Tot. “It got twisting up in my fishing line, Pip, and I untied it and throwed it out of the way. Oh, the boat’s running off with us, Pip! Stop it! Stop it, please! Polly Flinders has lost her cap and her head is cracking open and I’m tired of fishing. I want to go home.”

The cry of the little mischief-maker rang helplessly in Pip’s ear as the boat lifted on the crest of a wave and he saw with speechless dismay the outgoing tide was sweeping them swiftly seaward.

Already they were out of reach, out of hearing, out of help from the shore.

CHAPTER IV

ROVING ROB

JUST outside the Cove at this same hour a taut little sailboat lay rocking idly in the sunlit waves, its occupants a big, roughly dressed young man and a big, shaggy-coated dog. They had been out all morning with the deep-sea fishermen, far beyond the bar, and had found it fine sport pulling in the nets and seines full of shining spoil.

Now, stretched out on a pile of dingy canvas, the master of the *Bouncing Bet* gazed at his share of the morning's catch, still gasping and fluttering at his feet.

"I don't know what I took them for, do you, Don?" he said to the dog watching curiously beside him. "It would be a fine lark to go up the beach and sell them—at our own shack, perhaps. But I forget; we haven't any shack, Don; we couldn't get it with all our money; funny,

wasn't it, old chap? It's the first time you and I ever wanted anything that our money couldn't buy."

Don wagged his bushy tail, as he always did, at his master's confidences and looked as if he were considering the matter gravely. "So we're adrift, Don, without a home; we have only a bunk in old Sandy Brigg's cabin; we're a pair of vagabonds for the summer, you and I. We're just—what did I tell old Sandy this morning when I hired the boat? We are Roving Rob and his dog Don out for deep-sea fishing this season. That's all he needs to know, Don, and all we're going to tell. He had his own opinion of us. I could see it in his old mariner's eye. I am afraid it was not a very good opinion, but we don't mind that; it doesn't hurt our feelings at all. Meanwhile, as we're safely out of sight of the other deep-sea fishers, we'll dump our catch into the water and give them another chance.

As he took up a great fluttering blue-fish to fling it back into the sea a succes-

sion of shrill cries made him start into attention. Tossing over the shining waves came a flat-bottomed boat, with two children clutched tightly in each other's arms, shrieking desperately for help, and with good reason, for the outgoing tide had carried them over the bar and was bearing the helpless little mariners swiftly out to sea.

"Oh, catch us, catch our boat, please; we can't stop it—catch us!"

In a second the young man was on his feet. "Catch that!" he said, flinging a coil of rope deftly to the small runaways.

"Oh, I can't! I can't!" came the despairing answer from the white-faced Pip. "I can't let Tot go or she'll drown—she'll drown!"

And at this dreadful word Tot took a tighter clutch on her brother's neck and shrieked the louder.

"By George!" muttered the young man in dismay, as the rowboat danced to the crest of a swelling wave. "The little fools will drown indeed," and leaping into the

water, a few strong strokes put him beside the helpless little sailors. It was but a moment's work to fasten the rope he had flung to them and have their little craft safely in tow. But the boat had half filled with water from the cresting waves, the children were drenched from their swift passage through foam and spray. Their rescuer's movements were prompt and decisive. "There, now, stop crying; you're all right. I'll take you aboard with me. Here, let go your brother, little girl."

"Oh, I'm afraid—I'm afraid," wailed Tot, clinging to her one hold in this swaying, gleaming watery world.

"Tot, let go," said Pip, and even in his impatience with the little fool-baby the young rescuer noted the manly firmness in the boyish voice. "Take her, please; save her first; don't mind me."

But the strong-armed young swimmer made short work of the double transfer. In a few moments both the little adventurers were safe on the *Bouncing Bet* and wrapped in the oilskins and canvas that

were all its master could just now command.

After they had spluttered and choked over the fiery draught that was Roving Rob's notion of first aid to the injured in such accidents, Pip explained the situation.

"You belong at my—at that shack—on Carter's Cove?" was their new friend's startled question.

"Yes," said Pip. "I've been right sick, you see, and the doctor said I must go away somewhere for the summer——"

"Or he would die," put in Miss Tot, with a solemn shake of her head.

"Oh, I wasn't as bad as that, Tot," said Pip lightly.

"Yes, you were. That was what Milly said," continued Tot. "And she cried about it all night. And Judy took all her burying money and gave it to us to come here. And now she can't have a nice coffin with silk cushions, but she don't care a bit."

"Tot is such—*such* a baby," explained

Pip, his pale face flushing a little. "She tells everything. You see, Judy nursed me and Milly and all of us, and she had saved money for her funeral, and she let us have it to come here so I could get well."

"I see," said his listener gravely. "It was very good of her, I am sure."

"Yes, it was," said Pip. "Judy is always good."

"And she can make cookies and ginger-cake dainties," added Tot, "and cinnamon bread. Judy is the goodest woman you ever saw."

"How is it this very good Judy let you run away?" was the question.

"I didn't run away. I never runned away in all my life," replied Tot in a much injured tone. "It was the boat. Pip went to sleep and the rope got twisted in my fishing string, and I throwed the old rope away. I never want to go fishing any more unless I have a nice boat like this and a dog and a man. Are you a pirate like Daisy Bell's uncle?"

"She means a pilot," said Pip. "Tot,

of course he is not; a pirate is a very bad man indeed."

"Oh, I don't believe it! Daisy Bell's uncle isn't bad at all. He goes to church and says his prayers and is real good. And you are real good, too, I know," and Miss Tot flashed an engaging glance into the sunburned face at her side.

Altogether, acquaintance progressed rapidly as the *Bouncing Bet* beat her way back into the Cove against the wind.

The young Parkers learned that their rescuer's name was Rob—Roving Rob, his mates called him, and he lived down at the oyster wharf and went out deep-sea fishing every day. And he had no mother or father or sister or brother, but was quite alone—poor Roving Rob! He had sailed everywhere—Asia and Africa, China, Japan, India, Alaska—but he was tired of sailing now. He thought he would stay home and fish. Maybe in a few months he would go off again to the North Pole or Patagonia, or some place quite far off; he didn't know or care much where.

"And didn't you ever have a real, real home?" asked Pip, quite stirred with sympathy at such a reckless career.

"A *real* home," repeated Roving Rob thoughtfully.

"Like we have—over there," said Pip with a nod toward the little red-roofed shack in the sunlit beach.

"Oh, that's your home, is it?" asked Roving Rob with an odd laugh.

"It isn't really our house," explained Pip. "It belongs to some rich man in town. But with Milly there and Judy it's home just the same—a real, real home."

And Roving Rob laughed again and said that was a good thing to have, though he did not know much about it himself, never having had a real home that he could remember. And he hoped they would have a fine time this summer—but not to try deep-sea sailing again in a flat-bottomed boat, unless they had somebody to look out for them. With this parting warning Roving Rob "jumped" his passengers ashore, flung the "hawser" of their

rowboat over one of the jutting logs of the wharf, and pushed hastily off, perhaps to avoid any embarrassing thanks from the young lady hurrying over the sands to meet her rescued treasures.

For there had been a wild, despairing ten minutes for Milly when, running around from the kitchen at Pip's waking cry, she had seen the loosened rowboat tossing on sunlit waves far beyond her reach. Then she had caught sight of the sail beyond the Cove, she had seen the plunge, the rescue, the safety of her darlings. It was a very white, shaken Milly that came fluttering down the beach, followed by Judy, equally breathless and excited.

In the tender flurry of joy and reproach and relief the gallant rescuer was for the moment quite forgotten.

"Oh, my darlings, my darlings! Why, how did you break away like that? I thought you were gone—gone from me forever. Oh, Judy—Judy, they are wet

to the skin! Pip will catch his death of cold."

"No, I won't, I won't," cried Pip bravely. "I'm not cold a bit, Milly. I've had a drink that nearly burned me up and been wrapped in canvas and rubber, and I'm warm—just as warm as toast."

"And I'm warm, too," twittered Tot, "but my frock is all wet, Milly, and my shoes and my stockings, and Polly Flinders is wet, too, and her head will melt off, I know. Oh, I'll never go fishing again in a runaway boat, Milly, I'll never go fishing again!"

"You won't indeed. I'll see to that," said Judy decidedly. "With all your capers I never thought harm could come to ye on a stretch of desert sand like this. Come back to the house now and get dry and warm."

And very soon, for Milly was wise in sweet mother ways, a big driftwood fire was burning in the stone chimney place, and Pip was snugly settled on the great leathern couch that was of the cushioned,

comfortable kind in which men delight, while Tot, in the pink, wooly wrapper that her California grandma had sent her at Christmas, was safely seated on the bear-skin hearth rug doctoring Polly Flinders' head. And Milly, still in a nervous flutter at the thought of the darlings' peril, listened abstractedly as they chattered to her of Roving Rob.

"He is a pirate," said Tot, on whom the stories of Daisy Bell's uncle had made deep and lasting impressions.

"Tot, he is not," interrupted Pip. "I told you that pirates were always very bad men, and Roving Rob is good. He jumped into the water and saved us. Oh, I'd like to give him something for it—not money. I don't think he would like pay, Milly. But I could give him my silver medal that I got for Catechism last year. He wouldn't mind taking a medal, would he, Milly? Lots of sailors and soldiers that do brave things get them."

"No, he wouldn't mind taking a medal," said Milly gently. "You can give him

that, if you please, Pip, and maybe it will bring blessings on him and keep him from harm. Now you must not talk any more about this fright we've had. You'll get nervous and feverish and won't sleep a wink to-night, and you were getting so well and strong. Lie back on your pillows, dear, and I'll get the mandolin and sing you off to sleep."

And Milly got out the pretty mandolin that was one of the relics of better days, and lightly touching its strings, sang soft, soothing little songs in the gathering twilight—tender little songs that sent Pip drifting off into a happy dream world among his big cushions and made Tot's curly head topple down on the big bear-skin in blissful baby sleep.

And still Milly sang on, while the fire in the stone chimney blazed and crackled cheerily, filling the wide, low room with the rosy, blessed radiance of home.

Far out on the starlit waters the *Bouncing Bet* rose and fell on the swell of the incoming tide, her master stretched

on his pile of ragged sailcloth smoking the monogrammed cigar permitted in these hours of darkness, and looking up dreamily at the summer sky, as odd scraps of the evening's conversation with his small passengers echoed in his mind. "To keep Pip from dying—Judy's burying money—a real, *real* home. "Poor little beggars," he said with a short laugh as he tossed away his cigar. "It's lucky I caught them this evening or there would have been trouble in my shack. I don't like to think about it! I am glad they've got it, even if it does send us adrift, Don. I'm glad any roof-tree of mine is for once a real, *real* home."

CHAPTER V

A BUSINESS VENTURE

“OH, Pip! Pip! We’ve flyed away in the night—we’ve flyed away up in the clouds!” was the startling announcement that greeted Pip when he opened his eyes next morning. He started up half awake among his pillows and stared out of the little diamond-paned windows, where Tot, in her pink, wooly wrapper, was perched on the broad, low sill, her blue eyes wide with dismay.

They were in cloudland, indeed. Earth, sky, and sea had all vanished, even the slender pillars of the porch rose vague and shadowy in the white veil of the mist. “Oh, I didn’t do it,” said Tot, who after her experience of the previous day felt she might be held in some way accountable for this new disaster. “Milly! Milly!” and Tot ran to the dear guardian spirit who just entered the room. “We’ve flyed away

in the clouds. I want to go back—I want to go back—I don't want to go to heaven yet!"

And while Pip laughed and Milly soothed the little trembler, who was prepared for all sorts of strange adventures in this new world, the sun began to peep through the clouds, to Tot's great delight, and the lost earth to take shape and form again.

It was Judy's "market" day, as she called it, though "market" was an empty name at Carter's Cove. The nearest base of supplies was the oyster wharf, fully two miles distant, a long walk over bare sands, since none of the present little household could use the boat.

But wiry old Judy, with her big market basket, had taken the tramp sturdily more than once. "It's too hard on you, Judy, dear," said Milly as the old woman prepared to start off again this morning. "We must find some other way to get our provisions. I think if I tried I could row the boat."

"Is it a boat ye are thinking of after the heart scald we came near yesterday!" exclaimed Judy. "Never a boat will I trust unless there is a full-sized man to hold the oars. I'd rather tramp the sands till I drop."

"And you will drop with that heavy basket," said Milly anxiously.

"We have to eat," said Judy with a nod as she tied on her bonnet. "But I'll be looking around the wharf; maybe I can strike a bargain with some stout lad that will bring us the marketing in his boat when he has done with the day's fishing."

"Oh, yes, Judy dear, do try; we will pay him fairly for it. Pip must have chickens and eggs to make him strong and well. But the hot walk over the sands is too much for you, Judy. I would rather go myself."

"Is it *you?*" cried Judy indignantly. "You go with a market basket to a dirty, rough place where they sell the drink! Never while Judy Grogan has a hand to hold ye back will ye go there!"

And gripping her big basket resolutely the old woman took her way over the sands to the wharf more than two miles away. It was a long tramp for a woman of sixty. The July sun was blazing down from a cloudless sky without any friendly shade to temper its rays. When she reached the wharf, about which had grown up a rough settlement of sheds and cabins for the oyster men, Judy's head was throbbing and her feet burning. She was glad to "drop" indeed, on a packing-box, and while Sandy Briggs filled her basket for the return trip she questioned him about the "stout lad" and boat that would render these "killing tramps" unnecessary. Sandy was a one-legged old Scotchman, sour and suspicious.

"An' ye were the fules to come," he said. 'Tis a braw coast for men, but no place for women or weaklings. It's four years I have been at the wharf mysel', and never has the house ye're in been held a summer yet. It was some rich young fule's fancy

to build it there, and he tired of it himsel' quick as all rich young fules do."

"And small wonder," said Judy from the bottom of her heart, for she was hot and tired. "It's the lonely desert of sand and sea, God knows. But we've come to save the little lad and we'll stay to save him. It's only the long tramp here for the food that is killing me outright. If one of the fisher-boys about here could bring it to us in his boat we'd pay fair for it."

"Pay or no pay, ye canna count on them," growled old Sandy. "They're a feckless lot flitting back and forth as they will. There's one now," and the speaker nodded toward the wharf; "ye might ask him. But, mind ye, I'm giving him no good name, for I know naught of him save that he can handle a boat like a sailor born. And I've yet to see him drunk like the rest. I must say that."

"And that's something in a place like this," said Judy hopefully. "I'll go speak to the lad. If he is sober and decent as

you say maybe he'd like to make an honest penny when his day's work is done."

And she turned from old Sandy's store that held a conglomeration of everything, from butter to boat anchors, and hurried down to the wharf, where the master of the *Bouncing Bet* was just making ready to swing off for a deep-sea sail.

"Wait a bit, wait a bit," called Judy, waving her hand. "I want a word with you, my lad, before you go. Keep off your dog while I talk to you."

"Down, Don, down, old chap! He won't hurt you," and Roving Rob turned with a pleasant smile that, as Judy always said, took her heart at once, as she panted up to his side.

"Would you like a nice, decent, easy job?" she began eagerly. "I am looking for an honest man that would stop at Carter's Cove every day or two with a basket that it is killing me to drag over these burning sands."

"Carter's Cove! Carter's Cove!" Judy's listener looked into the kind old

withered face and revelation burst upon him. Judy! Judy of the burying money—Judy of cookie and cinnamon-bread fame—the wonderful Judy of his small passengers of yesterday was offering him a job! A job at Carter's Cove! For a moment the joke of it was too much for Roving Rob, and he stood quite speechless.

"Don't you understand, man?" said Judy, out of patience after the heat and glare of her long walk. I'm asking you if you will stop every two days at Carter's Cove, at the little cottage with the red roof. Maybe you know the place?"

"I—I—yes, I've seen it," was the answer. "You want me to stop there, you say."

"And bring my marketing from the store here on your boat—the butter, sugar, meat, whatever it is I order," explained Judy, feeling it was rather a slow-witted lad she had to deal with. "Every other day, you'll understand, no oftener. And what will you call fair pay for that?" she

questioned somewhat anxiously. "Will a quarter each time be enough?"

"A quarter!" echoed her listener as if in doubt; "a—a quarter!"

"Yes, a quarter," said Judy with sharp decision. "A quarter we'll give you, no more and no less. We're not rich folks with pennies to throw away. If you're a poor man yourself you know what a quarter means to a young slip of a girl that has to be teaching school year in and year out to earn a living for herself and her little brother and sister. If you'll take the job at a quarter you can have it; if you won't I'll drag the basket myself, though I drop on the way.

"Oh, I can't—can't let you do that," said Roving Rob quickly. "I'll—I'll take your—take the job, I mean—as you say——"

"At a quarter?" asked Judy firmly.

"Yes," was the answer with some hesitation, "at—at a quarter."

"It's all that it's worth," said Judy. "But it will be ten cents extra for taking

me back to-day, for I wasn't named in the bargain."

"Oh, we won't stand on that," said the young man with a smile.

"We will," answered Judy. "A bargain is a bargain, be it dollars or dimes, and I'm asking no favors. Now I'll get my basket and we'll be away."

And off they were in a few minutes, Roving Rob at the rudder, Judy and her basket comfortably settled at the stern, while Don, apparently doubtful of this new passenger, sat grave and watchful amidships.

"That's an ugly beast of a dog you have," said Judy disapprovingly. "What good is he to you?"

"Good? Well, not much perhaps. Still I would not like to give him up."

"The more fool you, then," said the old woman. "It's feeding two instead of one."

"I never thought of that," answered Roving Rob with a laugh. "But Don is all I have, you see," he hesitated, feeling it

would not be wise to give much of his personal history to his shrewd old listener.

"All you have?" repeated Judy warming into sympathy at once. "Haven't you father or mother, brother or sister, you poor lad, that ye have to take up with a dumb brute? I'm sorry for you. It's the lone, cold world when ye have naught but a dog. Are you American born?"

"Yes," answered the steersman, keeping his eye fixed on his course as if he did not wish to meet Judy's questioning gaze; "but my father and mother died when I was very young. And——"

"Ah, yes, yes!" interrupted Judy pitifully. "I know what that means. A hard road and a rough road for you to travel, my poor lad. And so ye took to the sea?"

"Yes, I took to the sea," was the brief reply.

"It's what many a brave, bold lad has done before," said Judy nodding. "There was my own third cousin, Andy Connor, was a sailor like yourself. And there wasn't a finer dancer in all Kildare

though one of his legs was cork. You have never met an Andy Connor in your travels?"

"Not that I remember," answered her companion gravely.

"I suppose not," said Judy. "It's likely he went down in the deep sea long ago—God rest his soul! But we split a sixpence betwixt us forty years ago. I am keeping my half of it yet."

"That means you were lovers, doesn't it?" asked the young man with a friendly smile as he turned his boat toward the shore.

"It does," said Judy. "But you can't count on a sailor lad, as every girl in Kildare knew, myself with the rest."

The *Bouncing Bet* had made the Cove now, and was tacking on to the little wharf.

Milly, still anxious about her young invalid's late adventure, had kept her little family under watchful care to-day. From the sheltered corner of the pond where Pip was throned in a big easy-chair

they caught sight of the approaching boat.

"It's my pirate," cried Tot, who insisted upon claiming the envied honors of Daisy Bell. "It's the nice pirate that caught us when we runned away. Milly—oh, let me go!—let me go see the nice pirate that is bringing Judy home!"

"Run off then," said Milly, who felt that the "pirate" deserved some thanks for his dousing yesterday. And Tot was off at the word, dancing gleefully down the shelving sands, her chubby arms outstretched in greeting to her rescuer who was just helping Judy ashore. "Oh, take me in your boat—take me in your boat and sail me around some more. Take me, please, Roving Rob——"

"It was you, then—you that saved the children yesterday!" exclaimed the old woman in delight, as Tot caught her "pirate's" hand. "Then ye have earned your job, indeed, my lad, she added, counting out the quarter and dime from her leather purse.

"There's your money now, and it will

be waiting for you every other day as I said, and luck go with it, every penny.

"There, there, now," continued Judy to the clamoring Tot. "Let him go now, darling; he will be back again and you and Pip can go for a sail with him, a long sail far over the deep blue sea, and be 'shipmates'—as Andy Connor used to say long ago—shipmates in earnest."

And with this promise Judy led the still wailing Tot up the shelving beach to the little red-roofed house, while the master of the *Bouncing Bet* stood for a moment looking after them. Then opening his hand he gazed at the silver pieces resting in his palm.

"Thirty-five cents, Don," he said to the dog who had leaped from the boat and stood waiting at his side. "The first thirty-five cents you and I have ever earned in our lives, lazy dogs that we are. I rather like earning money, Don; we'll keep it up awhile. And as Judy—good old Judy—says, luck go with it, every penny."

CHAPTER VI

AN ODD JOB

AND so Roving Rob's "job" at Carter's Cove began. It was a most satisfactory job, considering that he had never handled a market-basket before, and scarcely knew a potato in its raw state from an onion. But he was learning many things these summer days that young gentlemen who smoke monogrammed cigars are not taught even by world-wide travel. He found that pennies counted a great deal when a small family was outing for the summer, that dimes were serious considerations, and dollars—oh, dollars—weighed tremendously! He found that one chicken must make soup for two days, and its age and toughness did not count, for Judy would "boil it tender." He found that Sandy Briggs, in Judy's indignant opinion, was

an old Scotch rogue to ask such prices as he did for tea and sugar."

For there was no eluding Judy's housewifely eye, or her young lady's anxious mathematics. The market bill was sent with the market-basket, and settled promptly. Cash down, was the business motto at Carter's Cove this summer, even to Roving Rob's quarter. Judy met him on the beach, so there was no need for him to leave his boat and face the staring eyes of his young mistress.

It was the fourth day of his service. Pip and Tot, who had spied the *Bouncing Bet* afar, came down gleefully to meet her. Carter's Cove had done wonders for Pip already. There was a healthy glow on his cheek, his eyes had a new sparkle, the slender limbs were rounding into firmness and strength.

While Judy took the basket up to the house to empty it for a new "order," the children climbed into the boat, Tot begging for the promised sail.

"Milly said we could go if you would

take us," she pleaded, putting a chubby arm about her new friend's neck, as she stood on the seat at his side.

"No, Tot! She said if he *asked* us," corrected Pip. "She said fishermen had to earn money and couldn't waste their time on boys and girls. She said we must not bother you. And didn't come down for that at all. I came to—to——" the speaker paused, feeling that the speech usual at school presentations was too much for him. "I came to give you this." He drew a blue ribbon with a silver medal on it from his jacket pocket. "It's—its for—for saving us the other day," he explained, putting it in Roving Rob's hand.

"Saving you!" was the astonished exclamation.

"Yes," said Pip, "for saving Tot and me from drowning. Milly said she wouldn't like to give you money because—because—you might have fine feelings about it; fishermen often do. But the finest kind of people take medals—

soldiers and sailors and everybody. So I brought this to you. I got it for Catechism last year. It's real silver, and you can wear it all your life. And Milly says it will bring you a blessing."

Roving Rob was looking at the medal silently. It was a very small medal, just a little Maltese Cross with name and date on it, and the emblem, though very blue and bright, was poor and thin. But it brought a rush of feeling, of memories, that for a moment struck Roving Rob quite dumb.

He had won a medal like this himself long ago—long, reckless, careless, forgetful years ago. And he had lost it—even as he had lost the Faith, the hope, the boyish innocence that looked up at him now from Pip's starry eyes.

"Keep it," he said passing the medal back in Pip's hand. "I can't take it from you——"

"Oh, you must!" said Pip eagerly. "I'll feel real bad if you don't. I am getting well and strong again now; and I can

study hard and get another one next year and you can't."

"No, I can't," was the answer with a short laugh. "You've hit it there, my boy. I can't; so—well—I'll keep the medal, as you ask.

"Put it round your neck," said Tot, slipping the ribbon over his head. "Then everybody will know you are good—and pulled us out of the boat that was running away with us. Now take us sailing," commanded the young lady laying a coaxing hand on her rescuer's cheek; "take us away over there where the water rock-a-byes the boat. I'm not afraid to rock-a-bye with you, my nice, big Rob!"

And never having been under such orders before the master of the *Bouncing Bet* felt compelled to obey, so he spread the white wings of his boat and took his passengers away out to the mouth of the Cove, where the foam-crested waves leaped over the bar, and the salt sea spray flew in their faces as the *Bouncing Bet* "rock-a-byed" in the ocean swell.

It was rougher cradling than Miss Tot had ever known, and she clung to her "pirate" in mingled terror and delight. But Pip fairly shouted in boyish glee, as the boat rose and dipped again on the rolling waves.

"Hush screaming, Tot. You wanted to come. You're a nice sort of girl to take out sailing. Oh, it's fine—better even than I thought. I used to dream about something like this when we were shut up in our rooms, with the great brick walls of the next house before the window, and everything so hot and tight I couldn't get a good long breath." And the speaker drew a delighted, protracted sigh, that seemed to expand his slender frame several inches. "This is better than anything I dreamed. Oh, I wish I were big enough to have a boat like this, and go sailing every day."

"You'd get tired of it," said Roving Rob as he tacked around into quieter waters.

"No I wouldn't," said Pip; "not for

this one summer at least. Of course, I wouldn't want to sail all my life. I've got to study as soon as I get well and strong—study real hard to make up for lost time——”

“Make up for lost time!” repeated Roving Rob curiously. “Have you *lost* time already?”

“Yes,” said Pip; I’ve been sick ever since New Year. That’s a long time to lose for a fellow nearly thirteen. It will throw me a whole grade behind.”

“Oh, I wouldn’t bother about that—at thirteen,” said Roving Rob. “Take it easy for awhile. There’s no hurry——”

“Oh, but there is!” said Pip decidedly. “I want to get through school quick. I want to get to work, you see, and take care of Milly and Tot. I want to make money so Milly won’t be worried about bills and things like she is now. The doctor charged a lot for coming to see me last winter, and we had a nurse three weeks, and Milly hasn’t finished paying for it all yet.”

"And I couldn't go to dancing-school with Daisy Bell 'cause I had no slippers or sash," interposed Tot dolefully.

"You see it isn't like we had a father or mother," explained Pip. "Nearly all the boys I know have fathers or brothers or uncles to take care of them. But we have no one but Milly, and you don't make much money teaching school. But when I get to be a man she wont teach school any more, you bet. I'll take care of her and Tot myself, if I have to work all day and all night, too."

"What sort of work are you thinking of?" asked Roving Rob. They were in calm waters again now, and Pip, seated on a coil of rope, had fallen into the grave mood that befitted a young person of such heavy future responsibilities.

"I don't know yet," he answered thoughtfully. "Milly would like me to be a lawyer. But that costs a lot of money and takes too long. Milly would have to teach school until she was old and gray as Miss Dural. I think I had better

be a banker. I don't suppose you know much about bankers," added Pip, feeling he was getting beyond a mere fisherman's reach.

"I've heard of them," said Roving Rob. "Big sharks that swallow everything in sight——"

"Oh, no, no! they're not—not sharks at all," said Pip, too polite to laugh at his companion's ignorance. "They are men that work in a fine place where they keep money, piles and piles of money. Ned Wallach's father is a banker, and he has everything fine. And his grown-up sister that isn't half as pretty as our Milly has three new hats at a time."

"And Milly couldn't get any new hat at all," chimed in Tot, who was still snuggled up to her pirate's side in fear of more "rock-a-byes." "She just blacked her old one with shoe polish and put a bow on it."

Meanwhile quite unconscious of the lessons in family history that her brother and sister were giving so freely to their new

friend, Milly stood on the porch, her white dress fluttering in the breeze as she anxiously watched the sail of the *Bouncing Bet* rising and falling on the ocean swell.

“Oh, they are out so far, and the waves are quite rough. I ought not to have let them go, Judy.”

“What hurt will it do them? The lad will take care of them. The old sour-faced Scotchman said he handled a boat like a sailor born, and was sober and decent besides. What more would ye ask? Pip is getting stronger every day; it will do him good to have a fine whiff of the salt sea like he is having now. I’d like to see him off sailing every day.”

“Oh, Judy, not—not with that rough fisherman,” said Milly.

“And why not? Rough or smooth—whats the difference as long as the lad is honest and decent as him beyond?”

“But we don’t know that he is,” said Milly anxiously. “We don’t know any-

thing in the world about him except that he caught the children when they were adrift in the boat the other day. And you know what everybody has told us about the people about here—how rough and dreadful they are.”

“Aye, I know,” said Judy, “but I’ll trust my own eyes and my own sense against all their telling. And there’s no harm in that lad, I’m sure. I’m not saying that he has much head,” acknowledged Judy. “He gave me twenty cents over the right change to-day and never knew it, poor lad, till I showed him. And he has no more sense about driving a bargain for his fish than if he was a new-born babe. Whether it was five or six cents a pound he did not know. But its a soft head that often goes with a soft heart as I always heard my mother, God rest her, say. And there’s an Irish glint in the lad’s eye I like to see. I’ll warrant that some of his forebears came from the old sod.”

“There they are turning back now,”

said Milly who, while listening to Judy's doubtful praise of their new acquaintance, had been anxiously watching the course of the *Bouncing Bet*. "And Pip is enjoying his sail, I know. Oh, Judy, don't you remember how he talked about ships in his fever dream? Oh! how thankful I ought to be that I could bring him here, where he is getting so well and strong! You did it, Judy," and Milly slipped her soft young arm around the old woman in a grateful hug. "You did it all! If it had not been for you we would never have been able to come to Carter's Cove. And I'll trust your fisherman and everybody else at your word," added Milly with a happy tremulous little laugh. "He is a nice honest-looking fellow, I must say." For the *Bouncing Bet* had reached the little wharf, and her master, standing up in the stern, caught the children lightly in his arms and swung them safely ashore.

For one moment the lithe, strong figure was outlined against sky and sea and

Milly smiled as she saw the blue ribbon of Pip's catechism medal about his neck.

Ah, he must be a simple honest fellow indeed, simple and soft-hearted as he was big and strong. She could trust the children with him, as Judy said.

CHAPTER VII

DRIFTING

THAT brief glimpse of the stalwart figure with the blue ribbon about his neck had been most reassuring to Milly. So, also, was the brief interview the next Thursday when, Pip and Tot clamoring to go off sailing again, she had tripped down to the wharf to look at the boat and be quite sure that it was safe and seaworthy. It really seemed very strong and dry and clean, Milly declared approvingly to its master, who stood with his sailor cap in hand, very much confused at the young lady's visit.

"But the children ought not to take your time," she added as Pip and Tot clambered gleefully into their usual places. "You have your living to make, I know, and I don't like them to interfere with it."

Roving Rob answered that they did not

interfere with his work at all. He would be very glad to take them sailing whenever they cared to go.

“It is doing Pip good, I am sure,” said Milly. “You see, he has read so many sea stories, and he loves a ship. He used to dream about sailing when he was so ill. But—” Milly hesitated as if she found the words awkward to speak—“I would like to pay you a little for the use of your boat and for your time and trouble.”

And Roving Rob had flushed up to his close-cropped curly hair and said it was not worth any pay. If she would trust the children with him he would bring them back safe; that he promised. So the matter was settled and the *Bouncing Bet* skimmed off over the sunlit wave with its boatload of passengers, including Polly Flinders in a new sunbonnet that effectually concealed the late damage to her flaxen head.

And Milly turned back to the house, quite satisfied that her treasures were safe with this big, bronzed fisherman, who had

stood so confused in her gentle presence that he had scarcely raised his eyes to her face.

"He seems to be a real honest, simple fellow, as you say, Judy; a little dull perhaps."

"Dull!" laughed Judy. "He is that, indeed. He dumped three of the finest fish I ever saw on the wharf this morning, and said he had no use for them. No use, and he making his living, the simpleton, dragging them out of the deep sea at the break of day! As I told him it was well that no poor woman was looking to him to earn her bit and sup, for she'd fare sore. And he only laughed, showing all them white teeth of his, and said she would indeed. But it's the simpletons like him that take with children. Pip and Tot are mad after him entirely. It's Rob this and Robbie that all the day through."

And this especial day's sail only added to the charm. The breeze was fair, and the *Bouncing Bet* swept far out of the Cove, past the "rock-a-bye" of the bar,

and off into the deep sea beyond, where the waves rose and fell like the beat of some strong calm heart, so strong and calm that Tot laughed in baby glee, unconscious of fear, as the light boat rode the billows' curling crests.

Rob had brought lunch with him, such luncheon as Sandy Briggs could furnish; crackers, a little jar of marmalade, some sugar-topped cakes, half a dozen bananas; a rather light diet, we must confess, for a stalwart fisherman, but very satisfactory to his young passengers, whose appetites were wonderfully sharpened by this deep-sea voyage. They saw a great ship with all her sails set rising like a shadow on the far horizon, and Rob told them that it was going away over three thousand miles of ocean before it would touch land again.

"Will it sail through the dark night?" asked Tot, to whom a thousand miles meant nothing.

"Why, of course, Tot!" said Pip. "How could they sail that far in the day?"

"Oh, I wouldn't like to sail in the dark

night," said his sister, her voice a troubled little chirp. "I would be afraid. Did you ever sail through the dark night, Rob?"

"Very often," he answered, putting a steadying arm about the chubby little questioner who had snuggled up to his side, for Miss Tot was a restless passenger for a small boat, and had to be watched carefully. Long ago, in those dim years that belonged to the medal and blue ribbon past, Roving Rob had had a little sister very much like Tot, a little sister who had gone away with the angels, leaving all the gold and lands that would have been her earthly heritage to him alone. But neither gold nor lands had ever filled the place in his boyish heart that little Dolly had left empty. If she had lived to cling to him with tender, loving hold, like Tot, things might have been different with Roving Rob; he would not have been the idle, careless wanderer he was now.

"Sailors like Rob don't mind the night, Tot," explained Pip, who was well up in boyish sea-lore. "The stars show them the

way, don't they, Rob? Do you know how to steer by the stars?"

Rob thought a moment, his eyes fixed on the speaker's upturned face. "I'm afraid I don't," he answered.

"Then—then what can you do?" asked Pip in perplexity.

"Drift," was the answer; "drift around in the dark."

"Oh, but then you might hit a rock or a surf and get wrecked," said Pip seriously. "You ought to learn how to steer by the stars, Rob."

"Too late," said Rob briefly. "I thought about it once, but now it's too late."

"Oh, no, it isn't," said Pip; "you're not too old to learn things, Rob. Don't you know anybody that could teach you, Rob?"

"No," said Rob; "I don't think I do."

"Then you might get a book. There are lots of books about sailing, right there in our house. But Milly wouldn't lend them; she can't, you know, because they belong to Mr. Raynor, who owns the

house. But you might come up sometimes and read them, Rob." You—you can read, can't you?" asked Pip with delicate hesitation.

"Yes," answered Rob. "Though it has not been of very great use to me, I must say."

"Oh, I suppose it hasn't," said Pip. "I wish you could read some of Mr. Raynor's books, Rob; you'd like them, I know. He has a whole bunch of the finest boy books I ever saw—sea stories and Indian stories and premiums that he got at Saint Mark's College, and the Story of Columbus, with big colored pictures, that is great. Mr. Raynor got it as the first prize in history when he was at school. Milly has covered it in brown paper so we won't hurt it, and we read it every night."

And Roving Bob listened to this boyish chatter, feeling very queer, indeed. He had come to Carter's Cove in a mood of fierce impatience with all the world—of its fashions and flatteries and vanities—

determined to steal away a while where his fortune and name were unknown.

And following the whim of the moment, as he had followed each idle fancy for the last half dozen years, he had rented a little cabin on the oyster wharf, hired the *Bouncing Bet* from Sandy Briggs, and proceeded to "rough it" with the other rude fishermen on the beach. He had "roughed it" before; he had hunted bears on the Rockies, and lions in the jungles; he had camped in the desert tent of the Arab; he had ridden on camels and elephants, and boated in Venetian gondolas and Chinese junks. In short, Roving Rob had tried almost everything when weary of the idle ease of a rich man's life. But in all his roving by land and sea he had never had quite such an experience as this; never before had he been the market-man for a small family, never before had he been required to account for dimes or dollars, to a penny; never had he been "hired" for a quarter a trip. At first it had seemed a tremendous joke, something

to retail to his laughing friends in club-room or at dinner-table; but it did not seem quite so funny to him now. He felt he could never tell the story of the little sick boy brought to Carter's Cove, on Judy's burying money, to a laughing, heartless crowd; he could not joke at buying chickens that had to be "boiled tender;" he could never breathe even a whisper to a lady listener of the "shoe-polished" hat.

For as Roving Rob had stood to-day cap in hand in the full light of Milly's trusting eyes he had felt most uncomfortably like a trickster and a cheat.

How those violet eyes would blaze if their owner knew who it was that had intruded upon her home, learned all the pitiful little secrets of her poverty, taken Pip's medal, and Judy's pay. Big and brave man that he was, Roving Rob fairly quailed at the thought. She must *never* know; he must cut out the whole business at once. He would leave wharf, beach, Cove, even the *Bouncing Bet* herself, this

very night. So Roving Rob resolved as he turned back to the shore, with his young shipmates to-day; for selfish and thoughtless as life had made him, he was a fine, true fellow still in the depths of his soul and heart. But for long, careless, idle years those depths had been unstirred. Roving Rob had had no one to think of, to love, to live for but himself.

The chubby little girl snuggling like the lost Dolly of old at his side, the starry-eyed boy telling him all his hopes and plans, were stirring those depths strangely to-day. For unlike all the rest of his world, they knew nothing, cared nothing for his greatness or his gold; it was lonely Roving Rob, the poor fisherman, who was their shipmate and friend.

"I am afraid I won't be able to come up for you any more," he said as the *Bouncing Bet* neared the wharf. "I'm going away."

"Going away!" echoed Pip dismally.

"Going away!" said Tot, looking up

with a quivering baby lip. "Oh, not going away for *good*, Rob!"

"Yes—for good!" answered Rob grimly as he caught sight of the white-robed figure on the porch awaiting their return.

"Oh, I'm so sorry! We'll all be so sorry," said Pip. "Milly and Judy and all. I don't know how we will do without you, Rob."

"We won't get anything to eat," said Tot dolefully, "'cause Judy has stiff knees and can't walk to the store and all the other fishermen get drunk. Oh, we won't have anything to eat at all, if you go away, Rob!"

"And we won't have any more fine sails like this ever again," said Pip manfully steadying the quiver in his voice. "Oh, I thought—I thought—you were going to be here all summer, and we would have grand sails together, and I would get brown and big and strong just like you. Have you got a better job somewhere else, Rob?"

"Well, no," was the answer. "I can't say that I have a better job."

"Then why must you go?" asked Pip wistfully.

"He shan't, he mustn't," said Miss Tot decidedly. She was on her feet now beside her "pirate," with both of her baby arms about his neck. I won't let him. Oh, I don't want to stay at this Carter's Cove when the boat runs away with us and there will be no big Rob to catch us, no Rob to bring us anything to eat, I don't want to stay here at all," cried Tot. "I want to go back home where there are nice stores and houses and an organ-man and a monkey and Daisy Bell. I don't want to stay here with no one to save us from the storms," Tot wailed outright.

"Tot, stop crying," said Pip sternly; "stop crying and don't be such a baby." She heard Judy saying last night she hoped there wouldn't be a bad storm while we were here, for it would go hard with us out here all alone.

Hard with them! It would, indeed;

how hard Roving Rob, who had faced the wild sweep of wind and wave in that desolate coast, knew. Hard with them! Roving Rob glanced at the little toy of a house his passing whim had set down on that lonely shore with only the drunken fishermen of Oyster Wharf within reach. It had been madness for weak women and helpless children to come here, but the madness of unselfish despairing love that could not stop to count risk or cost.

Long ago—in the days of his medal and blue ribbon—Roving Rob had found a hapless mother bird fluttering and twittering about the nest full of little fledglings that had fallen from the cedar boughs near his home. Some gentle impulse had made him suppress the boyish shout that would have called his comrades, lift the nest softly back to its place, twist the shielding branches safely around it, the mother bird all the while fighting at him desperately with beak and wing. Day after day he had crept softly back to see that the nestlings were safe, dropping

crumbs of his cake or cracker within the little feathered mother's reach.

As Roving Rob saw the wistful look in Pip's eyes to-day, heard Tot's helpless baby cry, looked at the tiny red-topped house on the curve of the sea, he felt as if he had found that nest again—a nest that needed a strong protecting hand and a watchful eye.

“Don't cry,” he said to Tot as they drew up to the wharf. “I—I haven't gone yet, little girl. I guess I'll drift around here a week or two more. I won't go quite yet.”

CHAPTER VIII

A SHIPMATE'S DAY

SO TWO weeks passed and Roving Rob was still drifting around Carter's Cove. He had a "steady job," he explained to Pip, that would keep him and the *Bouncing Bet* at work for a month at least. But it left him plenty of time for Judy's marketing, plenty of time for long sails around the Cove, and beyond the bar sometimes far down the coast. And those long sails were doing wonders for Pip; as Milly could see. He was growing more sturdy and sunburned every day; he was learning to handle rope and tiller and sail and oar; to face the sweep of the wind; to ride the crest of the wave with fearless delight. There was no need of pillow or cushion now. Pip could tramp the beach, climb the sand dunes, spring from wharf into boat alone.

"And it's the bold sailor boy we have

indeed now," said Judy in delight as Pip came bounding up from the beach one morning with news that the *Bouncing Bet* was at the wharf for orders.

"And Rob says if Milly will let me go we'll make a day of it. There's a stiff sou'wester blowing and we'll go humming along the coast. And he knows a nice place we can stop and make a driftwood fire and have lunch, clams and coffee and smoked sausage.

"Clams and sausage!" exclaimed Milly. "And six weeks ago you were sipping chicken broth. Oh, Pip, dear, I'm afraid you're going ahead too fast."

"Not a bit of it," interposed Judy. "Look at his legs and his shoulders and at the red in his cheek and the light in his eye. That's what the winds and the sea are doing for him. Let him go. It will do him no harm."

"But we'll keep Tot at home," added Judy with a cautious nod toward the kitchen where that young person was

busily engaged with a diminutive iron upon Polly Flinders' laundry.

"It's no day for a bit of a girl like that to be out with boys and men."

And to this Milly agreed, for the waves were cresting high before the sou'wester. Miss Tot was a fidgetty shipmate when the sails of the *Bouncing Bet* bellied and her ropes grew taut in the wind. So although he knew there would be a wail when his absence was discovered, Pip hurried away quietly to the wharf, where having delivered his basket according to Judy's order, Roving Rob was waiting for him.

"I've got the 'Columbus,'" said Pip as he sprang into the boat, laying a covered volume under Rob's oilskin coat. "Milly said if I would be very careful of it I might take it out with me to-day, and we could read it together as we sailed. She says there are a lot of other books, all about steering and sailing, at the house, that she would like to lend you, for you would find them most—most improving. But she

doesn't *dare*. They all belong to Mr. Raynor and he would not like it at all."

"Oh, wouldn't he?" asked Roving Rob. "Why not?"

"Oh, because—because—" hesitated Pip, feeling it would require some delicacy to explain matters, "he is very rich and grand and wouldn't like his books meddled with by strangers."

"How does your sister know?" asked Roving Rob.

"Oh, she don't know him herself at all," answered Pip. "But she has heard about him." And Pip paused as consideration for his landlord prevented him saying more.

"And she heard no good, I suppose," said Roving Rob drily.

"No, she didn't," said Pip shaking his head. "You see, he is a very rich man that don't have to do anything at all."

"I see," said Roving Rob. "One of those idle, worthless fellows that ought to be kicked into some sort of honest work."

"Oh, Milly didn't hear that," said Pip

seriously. "But she heard that he was awful selfish; that he didn't think of anybody or care for anybody or live for anybody but just himself. And that's a bad way to be, isn't it?"

"Very bad," assented Rob briefly. "I never want to have money if it is going to make me feel like that, do you?" asked Pip.

"Well, just at this minute, no," answered Rob with a grim smile.

"Milly says," continued Pip, who was seated on the coil of rope while his companion watched the swelling sail as the *Bouncing Bet* skimmed before the breeze, "Milly says she would rather have me poor forever than be a rich, hard, selfish man and have shaky old tenement houses, where poor little babies die for want of fresh air, and stores that sell shirts that poor women have to make at six cents apiece."

"Who does that?" was the startled question.

"Mr. Raynor," said Pip with a grave nod.

"Oh, no, no—surely!" was the quick answer.

"Yes, he does," persisted Pip. "Milly knows. Lena Dulzky, one of the little girls in her class, was sick and Milly went to see her. She had to climb five flights of shaky stairs, so dark she could scarcely see the way, and when she got up there it was so damp and leaky and close she felt as if she could not get her breath. There was only one window, and they were cooking cabbage soup—that was all they had to eat. And Lena was sick, and the baby was dying in its old grandmother's arms, while its mother stitched on the shirts she had to finish that day to pay the rent."

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Roving Rob under his breath. "But what—what had Raynor to do with all this?"

"It was his house," Pip went on, his staring innocent gaze fixed upon Rob's face; "the whole block of tenement houses was his, and the store where they sold the

shirts, and the grocery where they ran up bills—everything was his. And all the poor people were working and living and dying to pay money to him. And he was away off in Paris, and didn't know or care."

"He didn't know or care," repeated Roving Rob drawing a long breath. "Well, I guess that's about the truth of it. He didn't know—or care——"

"Hello!" exclaimed Pip, suddenly diverted from this unpleasant subject by the flutter of a blue and white pennant in the distance. "There's Camp Xavier! And, oh, look at all the boys out bathing! Let's tack in shore for a minute, Rob, and see the fun." For it was fun, indeed, as could be seen even now from the *Bouncing Bet*. The waves roused by the sou'wester into rough play were leaping, hoarse-voiced, foam-crested, far up on the sands. And diving, jumping, shouting, in the surf a score of boys were having their morning romp with old ocean, that stirred by the

rising wind was showing "white caps" far out to sea.

"Oh! they are having a time of it," said Pip as the *Bouncing Bet* "tacked" in toward the shore. "I haven't see any real boy's fun since last Christmas, when I went skating and beat Tom Bradford all to a frazzle in a race down the creek. But skating isn't anything to this."

"No, it isn't," answered Roving Rob. "I suppose it wouldn't do for you to jump in and have your fun with the rest."

"Oh, I am afraid it wouldn't," said Pip wistfully. "Though I'd like it sure. You see if I got cold or sick again, it would worry Milly to death. And she has spent such a lot of money getting me well. But we could stop awhile, couldn't we? I'd like to see the camp. It has been so long since I've been with a bunch of boys——"

"We'll stop then, if you say so," said Rob as he headed the *Bouncing Bet* for the jutting point of sand that braced by a palisade of upright logs served as Camp Xavier's wharf.

A chorus of welcoming shouts greeted their approach, the swimmers came swarming gleefully around the boat to investigate her cargo.

"Melons—peaches—crabs? What have you got?"

"Nothing!" answered Rob. "Nothing but a big dog and a small boy that wants to stop and see your camp. Are visitors allowed?"

"Allowed, is it?" repeated a rich, healthy voice and one of the swimmers looking up showed a broad beaming face framed in grizzled hair. "You're welcome as the flowers of May. I'm Brother Mathias that was left in charge of these young rascals for my sins, I'm thinking. In with ye now, boys, in with ye all. You've had enough of the water to-day. In with ye, every one. If it had been any one but old Brother Mat in charge you'd never have stepped from dry land in a rough sea like this. In with ye. I'll not put my foot to shore until I have all of ye before me." There was a merry scram-

ble for the beach; with all his good humor it was plain that Brother Mat must be obeyed.

He stood, a sturdy old figure, in the surf counting his charges until the last of the twenty scurried up on the sand, then he turned to the visitors. "Tie the boat to the stakes and come up with us to dinner. Father Francis is down for a day or two, and we're giving him a fine spread. We were out fishing for it before day."

"Yes, go," said Rob to his young shipmate. "I'll stay down here with Don and watch the boat."

"Ah, not at all," said Brother Mat hospitably. "Come, both of you, and the dog, too, if ye want him. The boat will keep fast to the stake if you have a stout hawser. And we're to have sports after the dinner, wrestling and quoit-pitching, and a race up the beach."

Now, indeed, Pip's eyes kindled.

"Oh, Rob, come, please. I can't go unless you do. I just won't leave you all alone, when you brought me out and we

were going to have lunch together. Come, please—please!”

Rob yielded with evident reluctance. The *Bouncing Bet* was fastened securely to Camp Xavier's wharf; Don, who was dozing lazily in the stern, was left in guard while the two shipmates landed, and escorted by Brother Mat, who had flung a long cloak over his bathing suit proceeded up the beach.

“Why, hallo! shouted a sturdy young chap, pausing in his race up to the tents to stare blankly at the new arrivals. “Jumping Jinks! Is that Pip Parker—or his ghost?”

“Jack Kent!” exclaimed Pip delightedly recognizing the roguish leader of many a game. “Jolly old Jack! down here?”

“How—when—where—did you drop from?” asked Jack breathlessly. “I thought you were dying or dead. Whoop-a-loo there! Dick Warren! Hal Lynn! Here's Pip Parker—all to the good again.” And two other boys in red and

blue bathing suits turned at the call to stare for a moment and then burst into cheering shouts of surprise.

"Pip, Pip! Well, well! We're glad to see you out again. We heard you were down and out for keeps."

"It looked like it for awhile," laughed Pip as his three old schoolmates crowded about him clapping his shoulders and gripping his hand, "but I'm up and in again as you see. I was pretty bad off, but Milly, my sister, you know, brought me down to a place on the shore here—Carter's Cove—and it has fixed me up fine. How did you all get off like this?"

"Our folks were going to hotels for the summer," answered Jack. "Hotels—where we'd have to brush our hair and look nifty all day."

"And nothing doing but dancing and croquet," added Dick in deep disgust.

"So we struck our dads for Camp Xavier, and Brother Mat," said Hal. "It's fifty dollars for two months, and its worth five hundred. Boating, bathing, fishing.

Golly if you could see the busters we drew in this morning! Aunt Nance is cooking them for dinner now. And crabs and clams by the boatload! Fried chicken, corn cakes to beat the band! Ham and eggs every morning, all you can stuff! And ice cream that we freeze ourselves three times a week! You're one of the freezers to-day, Dick. You'd better peel off those bathing togs and get to work. Nance said the peach slush would be ready by twelve. We've got to do ourselves proud to-day. Father Francis is down——”

“Not—not old Father Francis that used to be at St. John's,” said Pip. “I thought he had gone away forever.”

“Yes, but they sent him back,” replied Hal, “back to die; he says he's so weak and can't see very well, and has to walk with a stick.”

“But he don't mind it a bit, does he, boys?”

“Pooh, no, not a bit,” was the answer. “You'd think dying was just fun to

hear him talk about it. And he says Camp Xavier is the sort of place he likes; he was a soldier once himself. He brought a graphophone down with him last night; the finest you ever heard. There it's going now, doing the darkey minstrel stunt." Hurry on, boys, and you'll hear."

And hurried on by his old schoolmates Pip for the moment lost sight and thought of the shipmate who had fallen back from the chattering group and was looking around for escape. Father Francis—"old Father Francis of St. John's"—was a person whom Roving Rob had no mind to meet.

CHAPTER IX

AN HOUR BY THE SEA

IT WAS a bewildering hour that followed for Pip. To be plunged suddenly into a stirring boy world, from which he had been exiled for months, to have jolly Jack Kent's arm flung around his shoulder, and Dick Warren's voice in his ear, and Hal Lynn chaffing in the old way at his side, while a dozen or more other boys pressed around in friendly curiosity, eager to see and hear the newcomer was exhilarating indeed. Then to be introduced to all the delights of Camp Xavier, the tents with their rows of snug little cots, each with its folded army blanket; the big marquee with its swinging bellrope that it was Dick Warren's business to pull; its line of board tables, set with shining plates and cups of tin, all of which could be whisked away in a moment, and the canvas screen removed disclosing a simple altar with

tapers and cross for Sunday Mass. Then, of keen if more prosaic interest was the grub tent, where Tobe's old Nance ruled again over the rusty cook-stove, amid crates and boxes, barrels and buckets, cackling and clucking coops of supplies.

With twenty boys to feed marketing was a serious business at Camp Xavier, and the small farmers and fishermen along the shore and back behind the sand hills were in luck this year, as Uncle Tobe had said.

Pip learned that though sturdy old Brother Mat was the ruling and moving and providing genius at Camp Xavier, the younger Brothers from the House of Studies took turns in coming down to read and talk and share the games with the boys, to help along a few who needed to be coached in grammar or mathematics, from the autumn session, to head exploring expeditions back among the hills or far up in the sands.

"One mile is the limit for boys to go alone," said Jack. "The camp is staked

with four blue flags. It seemed a little strict at first for fellows as big as we are, but the life-savers up the shore told Brother Mat such yarns about sharks and quicksands that he put up the flags and laid down the law."

"And if you break it?" asked Pip curiously, for Jack was rather given to breaking laws he knew.

"Shipped home by the next boat," replied Jack briefly. "And Brother Mat don't fool about it—two boys went last week. But when there's a Brother to head the gang we tramp it for miles. And there are two boats that carry eight boys each; we can't all go out together, but we take turns rowing and sailing every day. And fishing, oh! if you could see the busters we hauled in this morning just round the Point!"

Altogether there was so much of absorbing interest to hear and see about Camp Xavier that before Pip realized how quickly a couple of hours had passed the big bell was clanging out for dinner,

and the boys were hurrying in to the marquee, where the long tables were laden with all the solid, good things that befitted a seaside camp: Clam chowder, fried chicken, hot biscuit and johnny cake, great platters of fish just out of the sizzling pan, crabs that had been kicking in the net an hour ago.

It was such a dinner as made the "marketing" of Carter's Cove dwindle by comparison into a "black fast," but the sight and smell of it recalled Pip to the obligations of friendship.

"Jinks!" he said, starting up remorsefully. "Where is Rob? I suppose he didn't like to push in with you boys, and now—now I've lost him."

"Who is Rob," asked Jack.

"He's a fisherman up at the wharf," explained Pip. "He takes me out in his boat nearly every day, and we have fine times together. He has taught me to sail and row and all kinds of things. Oh, I wonder where he is! I ought not to have left him like this. I guess he felt sort of rough

and strange with you fellows and slipped back to the boat."

"Oh, let him stay there," said Dick Warren. "What's the odds, Pip? Those wharf fishermen are a tough lot and he won't care."

"Oh, but I do!" said Pip. "He has been so good to me that I can't go back on him. Brother Mat asked him to come up to dinner, too. I'll go get him right now."

And finding Pip thus decided the other boys went with him to look up the missing guest. The young campers were hurrying from all directions to the welcome call of the bell. Pip cast a swift look along the beach; the *Bouncing Bet* rocked lightly at her moorings, her white pennant fluttering in the breeze. Don was dozing lazily on guard, but there was no Rob in sight. And after a searching glance up and down the sands that stretched bare and deserted from reef to point, Pip yielded to the impatient persuasions of his chums and they all hurried back to the dinner where grace had already

been said and the merry music of knives and forks was in full swing.

Meantime Rob had been having various experiences of his own. He had no mind to push in with the other fellows, as Pip had guessed; indeed, his one wish as soon as he had seen the crowd at Camp Xavier was to escape as promptly as possible. For Roving Rob was not much of an actor, and there were times when he felt the rôle of a wharf fisherman rather too heavy for his skill.

So when Pip was taken up enthusiastically by his old chums, his shipmate had managed to slip off, not to the boat (that was already a center of interest to a dozen or so young campers, but higher up the beach, where it jutted out into a point and the ruin of an old light-house unused for years was half buried in the shifting sands. Feeling this would be a safe shelter from the curious eyes and questioning tongues of the wide-awake young campers, Rob swung himself through one of the gaping windows—the

door had long since been blocked with flotsam and débris from sea and shore—and stretched himself comfortably on the sands that had drifted in dry, soft heaps over the crumbling floor. The merry voices of the boys came cheerily from the camp, the waves broke in deep, full-voiced music below him, through a wide fissure in the ruined wall he could see a glorious picture of sunlit ocean and arching sky. But there was a new shadow on Roving Rob's face to-day, that the light and joy about him could not lift. Pip had set him to thinking of things of which he had never thought before. The close, foul tenement-houses in which little babies were dying for want of air, the weary women toiling all day for the miserable pittance that would "pay the rent"; the heartless landlord, grasping all and feasting, idling on the pitiful earnings that to his helpless victims meant food and breath and life.

"George! The little chap hit hard!" A grim smile flickered over Roving Rob's face as he recalled Pip's unconscious

“knocks.” “I never had such an out-and-out hammering before. And every stroke true—deadly, devilishly true! I knew I was a fool—an idle, worthless fool—but I find I am something worse—ten thousand times worse—I’m a swindler, a robber, nay, a murderer. I wonder how many baby deaths are at my door! I can just see that white-robed, soft-eyed girl tripping up those breakneck stairs of Raynor’s Row now, and sickening at what she saw and heard there. Confound that hard-headed, hard-hearted, close-fisted Belton. I might have known better than to give him full swing over my property. But, as the boy said, I didn’t want to be bothered—I did not know or care. And here I am playing the fool still—worse than the fool, a great deal worse—so that same clear-eyed girl would say if she knew that it was Robert Livingston Raynor drifting around the coast, learning all her family troubles, buying her scanty little meals, taking her pitiful little pay, dodging her gentle glance like the cheat and fraud he

is. But it's like the birds nest of long ago. I don't dare to leave such a set of helpless innocents in that lonely shack of mine. I don't *dare!* It is no place for them—no place for weak women and children. Suppose a storm should strike them—such a storm as I've faced in the Cove! Suppose the boy or that baby girl should get ill! Suppose—great Heavens!—suppose a thousand things in which they would be absolutely helpless and friendless—with only those toughs at the wharf within reach. No!" Roving Rob set his lips firmly, as he sometimes could and did; "there is no way out of it. I've got to drift around and keep watch—keep watch and dodge Miss Milly's starry gaze as best I can. She suspects nothing, and, with Heaven's help, she never shall! I will be rough, trusty fisher Rob until she and her little flock are safely back in town. And now I wonder, since no one is near enough to catch the breath of my perfecto, if I dare venture on a decent smoke."

He thrust his hand deep in his fisher-

man pocket and drew out a silver cigar and match case. Taking from it a monogrammed cigar, he was about to light it when he suddenly paused at the sound of voices without. Quickly he dropped cigar and silver case out of sight as the speakers stopped directly beneath his broken window.

"Thanks, my dear Brother Leo," said one in a cheery but feeble tone. "We will go no farther. I will sit down in this old ruined wall and rest. My heart warns me I must not tax my strength. I would not wish any sudden illness to mar the pleasure of my visit. What a happy time the dear boys are having here! What a happy, merry time! It reminds me of a gay party I headed about fifteen years ago."

"When you were pastor at St. John's, Father?" asked a younger voice.

"Yes, when I was pastor at St. John's. Though I was *old* Father Francis even then, I was hale and hearty enough to lead the lambs of my flock on a frolic that

would make a happy and innocent close to a beautiful day. It was a First Communion day," continued Father Francis softly, "always the joy of a pastor's heart. And there was a large class at St. John's that year—fifty boys at least. I always looked after the boys myself. The girls, gentle little angels, we can leave to the good Sisters, but the boys—ah, the boys!—they need the shepherd's crook and staff. And we had what might be called a hard crowd that year at St. John's. I had gone down in the slums and found many a lost lamb caught in the thorns and bramble. Yes, we had a large class of very poor boys, many of them ready to shirk at the last because they had not a pair of shoes or a whole jacket to wear. But," and the speaker's voice grew even softer and more tender, "there was one who had all that earth could give and held it all unspoiled. He was heir to a princely fortune, the master already of a princely house. Perhaps you have heard of him these latter years—Robert Livingston Raynor."

“Raynor! Robert Livingston Raynor—not the millionaire, the traveler!” There was startled surprise in Brother Leo’s tone. “I did not think—I did not know that he was a Catholic.”

But Father Francis went on as if he had not heard the amazed remark.

“Robbie headed the class, an exemplar to them all, so earnest, so eager, so attentive. There was some little trouble at the very first; the boys were inclined to scoff at the young ‘plute,’ his shiny boots and snowy linen, and Robbie found ‘Smudge,’ one of my finds, an undesirable partner, and asked to sit in his own pew alone. But after I had a talk with him he understood. Yes, my little Robbie understood and he kept his place unflinchingly at Smudge’s side. The last day of the retreat I found him waiting for me at the rectory after the early Mass, eager and wide eyed.

“‘Oh, Father,’ he said breathlessly, ‘Smudge’ says he can’t come to-morrow; he hasn’t any jacket. He said he knew I

would be glad, as I would not have to walk with him, but I am not, Father, oh, I am not glad at all!

“‘And,’ he hesitated a moment, like the shy little gentleman he was, ‘my god-mother in Paris has just sent me some money to buy a birthday present—a watch or a new pony or whatever I want most. But I’d rather—much rather—give it to the boys that haven’t anything. So won’t you please take it, Father, and get Smudge and the rest of them jackets and shoes and whatever they want?’ He slipped a banknote in my hand—it was for two hundred dollars.

“‘Robbie, my dear boy,’ I protested, ‘this is altogether too much.’

“‘Oh, is it?’ he asked in surprise. Robbie was not much of a financier in those days. I took a rapid mental review of my ragged regiment. ‘Fully one hundred dollars too much,’ I said.

“‘Then—then,’ Robbie’s face brightened, ‘can’t you take the rest, Father, and give the boys a picnic somewhere, a real

nice picnic on a big boat, you know, with lots of things to eat? Smudge was never on a big boat but once, and then he stole a place among the freight; he says he never has good times unless he steals or sneaks them—and—I have such a lot. Oh, Father, won't you give them all one real good time they will remember always, one real good day they will never forget?"

"Ah, well, well—as you can guess, Brother Leo—my own old heart warmed at the thought of what such a day would mean to my poor little ragamuffins, and I gave in to Robbie's plan. And such a day it was! The First Communion Mass, with Robbie and Smudge leading the procession to the altar, and all my poor little lambs for that blessed hour at least were white and pure and whole!

"Then the breakfast which my good Sanctuary always served in the school-hall, and the Rosary afterward around Blessed Mother's altar, and then to the wharf, where the big boat was waiting for us with half a dozen or so of the young

St. Vincent de Paul men to 'big brother' the crowd. Officer Malone, good man, wanted to go along; he said he could not hope the grace of God would hold the gang I was taking with me, for Smudge, Jones, and some twenty others were the worst young toughs on his beat. But I wouldn't let him come; we wanted no policeman on guard this blessed day. And they were not needed; there wasn't a scrap or an ugly word that whole day. We went for a two-hours' trip down the bay and stopped at a strip of beach where the lads could boat and swim and fish for a while and empty the hampers of good things we had brought with us, and then home again through the golden sunset to the beautiful Benediction. Ah, it was a wonderful day for some poor little lambs!" concluded Father Francis softly, "a day that, as Robbie said, they could never forget!"

"And yet," said Brother Leo, "he must have forgotten."

"How do you know?" asked Father Francis, almost sharply.

"Only what I have heard," said the younger Brother hesitatingly; "that he is a man of the world—without faith, without serious thought or aim or purpose."

"Aye, I have heard all that, too"; there was a tremor in the old priest's voice. "I have heard it, too. Ah, it is a world of sin, sorrow, and temptation, my brother, and our lambs will go astray on its darkened ways. They tell me poor Smudge is serving a five-year term in prison now. And yet, Brother Leo, if after fifty years as a shepherd of souls I know anything of the human heart, I will venture to say there is a beautiful day in the far past that neither Smudge nor Robbie have forgotten—or can forget. It shines out of the darkness like a star—a star that I hope, I believe, in God's good time, will guide them back to fold and Shepherd yet!

"And now—now I am quite rested, dear Brother, and we will go back to our little campers, for it is dinner time, I know, and

I am the guest of honor to-day and must not be late."

Father Francis rose as he spoke, and laying his hand on Brother Leo's arm, retraced his way slowly to the camp.

And Roving Rob lay motionless, his head resting on his clasped hands. But the sunlit gap in the broken wall on which his eyes were fixed was dimmed with a mist that did not rise from the sea.

"Smudge in prison!" he murmured to himself. "Smudge and I—partners again, so the dear old man feels. Smudge and Robert Livingston Raynor both lost alike!"

CHAPTER X

A HOMEWARD VOYAGE

DINNER was over at Camp Xavier, a dinner that, beginning with grace from Father Francis, had proceeded in a gale of fun and frolic until the platters had been cleared as only hungry boys can clear platters, and the last heaping mound of ice cream had vanished.

Then as the boys prepared for the dish-washing that was a part of camp duty, Brother Mat came up and laid a friendly hand on Pip's shoulder.

"Sorry to hurry you, my boy, but the wind is freshening and that shipmate of yours is impatient to get off. This coast is not over safe in a gale."

"Oh, I'll come right away, then," said Pip quickly. "I've had such a good time that I did not know how late it was."

And amid a chorus of cheery good-bys and hearty invitations to come back as

soon as he could, Pip hurried away to the wharf, where Rob, already seated in the *Bouncing Bet*, was awaiting him with some anxiety.

"Time to be off," he said briefly, as Pip sprang to his place in the boat and they made loose from their mooring. "We've got to make the Cove as quick as we can, for there is a storm over there," and he nodded toward a faint line visible on the horizon.

"I am sorry I kept you waiting, Rob. I came down to the wharf to bring you up to dinner, but I couldn't find you. Where were you, Rob?"

"Oh, loafing up there by the old light," was the careless answer. "I felt I would not be in it with all those old chums of yours."

"Yes, you would," answered Pip loyally. "I told them all about you, Rob."

"You did?" interrupted Rob drily. "How much about me could you tell? I may be the biggest scamp afloat for all you know."

Pip lifted the clear eyes that were so like his sister's to Rob's face. "But I know you're not," he said, "because—because you look good, Rob. Milly says so, too. She says you have a very fine face. And Judy thinks you're great. They were talking about you last night," continued Pip, unconscious how Rob's "fine face" had flushed beneath its coat of tan.

"Nothing bad about me, I hope," he said.

"Oh, no!" answered Pip, "only you brought us home too much money again, Rob, thirty cents too much. Judy was worrying about it. She said you had no head for counting at all."

"She's right there," agreed Rob. "I never had."

"Didn't you ever learn to count, Rob?"

"Learn to count," repeated Rob. "Well, yes, after a fashion. But I always get some one else to count for me when I can."

Pip paused for a moment in pitying

consideration of his shipmate's many deficiencies.

"I don't suppose you ever went to school, then, did you, Rob?"

"Oh, yes, I went to school," replied Rob. "But it did not do me very much good, as you see."

"I am afraid it didn't," said Pip. "Some schools don't. You can just slip through and not learn anything. But you can't do that at St. Mark's. They catch you at it quick. I was getting along fine before I was taken sick last winter—history, geography and mathematics. I was going through brimming. I brought my books up here, and now Milly says that I am feeling so well I ought to study a little every day and freshen up for school in the fall. If you'd like to go over my arithmetic with me, Rob, it might help you. You ought to know how to count. Everybody won't give you back the wrong change you make like Milly. Just suppose you lost thirty cents every day!"

And Rob flung back his head at the

words and burst into a merry, ringing laugh that swept all the shadows from his fine face and left it bright and clear as a boy's—a laugh that made Pip look at him doubtfully and recall Judy's final decision last night: "It's a warm heart and a friendly hand the lad has, but I can not say much for his head."

Meantime the *Bouncing Bet* had been skimming before a breeze that was freshening every minute. Rob had spread all sail for a swift flight back to the Cove, casting now and then an anxious glance at the horizon, where the line of cloud showed clear and sharp against the blue of sea and sky.

"I tell you we're clipping it," said Pip, who had begun to take a sailor's pride in the speed of the *Bouncing Bet*. "A racing yacht couldn't do much better than this. Did you ever see a racing yacht, Rob?"

"Yes," answered Rob, "I've seen most every kind of craft. I—well, I took to the sea early."

"How early?" asked Pip with interest.

"Oh, when I was ten years old," was the reply.

"Ten years old! That was early," exclaimed Pip breathlessly. "What could you do when you were only ten years old, Rob?"

"Swim, row, sail," answered Rob briefly. "Bigger men, of course, were along, but I handled the ropes and oars even then."

"But not—not for pay?" asked Pip. "You didn't have to work for your living, surely, at ten years old, Rob?"

"Just about as much as I work now," answered Rob with the laugh that so often seemed to dance from his eyes to his lips as he talked to Pip. "I never was much on working, first or last. Rather loaf—drift—fool around—like I'm doing now."

"Would you?" asked Pip, and there was a faint shade of perplexity in the boyish face. "And are you just going to fool around all your life, Rob? That don't seem exactly right."

"Why not? What's wrong about it?" asked Rob.

"I—I don't know," said Pip in a troubled tone; "that is, I don't know how to tell you, Rob. But Milly says when I wish she didn't have to teach school that everybody has some work to do in this world—*everybody*—rich and poor. Even if she were rich, she said, she would have to do something—help poor people and look after their little children, and take care that they had nice, clean houses to live in, not dreadful places where there is no air or light, and the babies get sick and die——"

"Like that rascally Raynor's place," parenthesized Rob.

"Yes, like his," agreed Pip. "But maybe he isn't so bad after all, Rob. Maybe he is just fooling round, *too*, and doesn't see or know. Maybe there is no one to tell him what he ought to do. Milly says rich men never hear the real plain truth."

"Once in a while they do," said Rob drily. "And it hits hard, as it ought. And

I guess you and your sister are right about the fooling. A great husky fellow like me ought to have a steady job. You're dead right, little shipmate," and again the smile flashed from Rob's eye to his lip and woke the whole "fine face" into life and light. "I'll think it over. Meantime," and his look sobered suddenly as it swept from sea to shore, "my job just now is to get you home before that storm bursts—if I can." For the sunlight had grown dim all at once, and the line of cloud was a big black battlement now. Sullen mutterings came from its heavy depths; ever and anon its jagged edges blazed ominously.

Rob had steered clear of the shore, where the waves were foaming madly over the reefs and shoals, and there was a deep boom in the break of the billows upon the bar that Pip had never heard before! So they had kept well out to sea with the *Bouncing Bet* skimming with outspread sail before the wind.

But now, as Rob cast a swift, anxious

glance around, his voice grew quick and sharp. "I thought we could make it—but—we can't. Here, grip the tiller, Pip; hold her hard against the wind, while I take in sail. George! It's coming quick. I was a fool, a cursed fool, to wait for this!"

He sprang up and began hauling in the sail, lashing it in desperate haste to the mast, while a sudden hush seemed to fall upon the waves, their white crests flattening for a moment as if cowering in affright.

And then, with the crash of a thousand batteries, the great battlement of cloud broke into flame and roar, the wind leaped out with a wild shriek—the storm burst in all its fury. The *Bouncing Bet* whirled, careened, almost went over. Speechless with terror, Pip clung to the tiller, feeling that every moment would be his last. But a strong arm was flung around him, a stronger hand than his caught the helm, a deep voice with a new note of strength and manliness was speaking cheer.

“Steady now, hold fast, little shipmate; we’ll weather it yet. Steady! Wind and tide are with us and we’re scudding straight for the Cove.”

“Milly, oh, poor Milly! Milly and Tot!” The loved names trembled on the little shipmate’s lips. “Oh God, help us! Save us—let us get back to Milly and Tot!”

On swept the *Bouncing Bet*, plunging, swaying, careening before the wild fury of the wind, while drenched by flooding rain, breaking waves, and blinding spray, deafened by the crashing thunder and roaring surf, Pip clung desperately to his shipmate, whose strong hand still held the driving boat to her course.

“Now, God have mercy on us!” burst involuntarily from his lips, as, with a shivering crash the mast came splintering down, gashing his temple. “Pray, Pip! I can’t—little shipmate—pray!”

CHAPTER XI

IN THE STORM

IT HAD been a long, long day for the little shipmates left at Carter's Cove; when Tot discovered Pip's desertion, nothing but a pan full of sugar-topped cookies and a story could divert her from tears and despair.

"Sit up to the table, now," said that wise comforter, Judy, as she rolled out the dough, "and you can cut out the little cakes yourself. That's the work for a pretty girleen. It's only bold boys like Rob and Pip that should go roaming the sea with the winds and waves blustering as they are to-day."

Judy cast an anxious glance out of the kitchen window as she spoke. The "blustering" was growing louder every moment—the dark line rising on the horizon told of the coming storm.

"God send the lads safe home before

it breaks on us," whispered Judy to herself. "And what's to keep us all from washing away, if the waves rise on this stretch of sand, I can't see."

"What are you saying prayers for, Judy?" asked Tot, looking up from her cake cutting.

"It's a way I have when my beads are not handy," answered Judy cheerfully. "And I was wishing to myself that we had a nice Giant's Wall, like they have in Ireland, to keep off the sea."

"Did the giants build the wall?" asked Tot, her eyes opening wide with interest. "And did you ever see it, Judy?"

"I did," answered Judy. "And a grand wall it is to this day. The waves may beat against it until they are mad, but they can't get by. Listen now and I'll tell you about it. I'm not saying it's all the truth, mind ye, but I'll give you the story as it was told to me."

"There was once a giant living in the north of Ireland that was the worst of his kind. He lived in a great place on the

Irish coast, and he robbed every one, high and low, far and near. No poor woman within forty miles could call a cow or pig her own, while, as for the geese and chickens, he gathered them in by the hundred, to fill his hungry maw.

"You see, it was before Saint Patrick brought the true Faith to Ireland; and between the giants and the witches and the Druids it was in a bad way."

"Druids!" repeated Tot, who was quite familiar with the giant and witches of Judy's legends. "I never heard of them before. What are Druids, Judy?"

"Druids," said Judy. "I don't like to give them the holy name, but they were a sort of priests—heathen priests. They knew nothing of the true God or the true Church; how could they, poor men, for it had not been told them yet? And so they worked charms and spells by dark ways of their own, and the grandest king in all Ireland would not dare to go against their word or will. But little the giant cared for Druid or king. He had built a

wall before his castle that no mortal man could climb, it was that high and that broad and that strong. And every year and every month and every day he went on building that wall further and further along the shore, until he was holding half the north of Ireland for his own.

“The people that he drove from their homes flocked in fright to the king, and told their tales how the giant’s fist fell on their roofs like a thunderbolt, and his foot trampled down their fields, and his breath could blow the waves into storm from Bengore Head to Rathlin Isle.

“And the king looked at his soldiers, and fine men as they were he felt they would be no more than thistle down against a giant like that.

“‘I can do nothing for you,’ he said sorrowfully. ‘Go to the Druids, for they have power beyond that of mortal man.’

“But the Druids shook their heads, too. ‘Our spells are growing weak,’ they said. ‘We can’t tell what it is, but the strength is going from us.’ It was the Sign of the

Cross drawing near—though that they could not know.

“ ‘What are we to do, then?’ cried the poor people who had been robbed. ‘What are we to do against this thief of the world?’

“Then one of the Druids that was wiser than the rest spoke up and said there might be a gleam of hope for them yet. He told them that far back in the hills—in a dark cave that the light of day never touched—there was an old Druid whose age no man could count. He was that old that the flesh and blood had dried from him, and he was no more than the shadow of a man; but no living thing could stand up against the look of his eye or the lift of his hand.

“ ‘We’ll ask him to come out and help you,’ they said. And they called on him to put his power upon the giant and stop his murdering work.

“ ‘I’ll try it,’ he says, and he sighed sorrowfully as he gave the word. ‘I’ll try it though it will be the end of me, I surely

fear. I was thinking to live,' says he, sighing again, 'to see the Holy Sign that is coming nigh us, to hear the Holy Word that is sounding across the sea even now. And so I've kept in the stillness and the dark, for I am but the wraith of a man that will melt like the mist in the light of day. But since ye've called me I'll do what I can.'

"And with that he took up a white-berried mistletoe bough, and, bidding no one come nigh him, went boldly up in the darkness to the giant's gate. Though it was barred by copper and iron and brass, it flew open at the touch of the bough, and the old Druid went in. And what passed between them mortal man never knew, but that night there was a storm such as had never been seen or heard before. It shook all Ireland from Malin Head to Bantry Bay. And when the morning came the giant's great castle was but a pile of dust that the winds could blow away, and where he and the Druid had gone in the darkness no one could say. But the wall he had

built stood still, and there's some that think the giant is lying bound by the Druid's spell beneath it until the judgment day. And the Druid himself melted into the mist as he had said. There's them along the coast that tell of seeing the wraith of an old man walking the giant's wall before a storm even yet.

"Now there the cakes are ready for the oven. So you can take Polly Flinders out for a breath of this fine fresh air. But don't be going far from the door, darling, for there's a 'sough' in the wind I don't like. May the Lord send the lads home safe and sound."

But as the day wore on it seemed as if Judy's prayer was in vain. The "sough" of the wind grew deeper, the waves boomed up higher on the sands, the line on the horizon, faint and sun-touched in the forenoon, rose in dark menace that even the little household at Carter's Cove understood.

Blacker and blacker loomed the great cloud cliffs against the summer sky;

louder and hoarser grew the voice of the sea, and still the *Bouncing Bet* did not come.

Milly stood watching on the porch, pale with fear that all Judy's forced courage could not dispel.

"Don't be fretting about the lads. They are stopping somewhere up on the sands till the storm goes by. Rob is no fool—when he is on the sea."

"Oh, I don't like black skies!" wailed Tot. "I don't want our house to tumble down like the giant's. I'm afraid—I'm afraid!"

"Afraid!" cheered Judy. "What's there to frighten you, darling? Come in now, before we get the little scurry of wind in the cloud there—come in and we'll shut the windows and doors and—and— Holy Mother! it's on us now!" cried the old woman, dragging in Milly and Tot with sudden alarm, as the wind leaped out of the riven cloud and with crash of thunder and blaze of lightning the storm was on them, indeed. "Come

in! Come in! Hold to the door while I slip the bolts of the windows," cried Judy, flinging all her wiry strength against the swinging shutters and barring them against the wild fury of the blast.

And then—then—the black darkness of a strange night fell upon them and all the evil powers of earth and sea and sky seemed let loose against the little red-roofed home. The shriek of the wind, blended with the crash of thunder and the hungry roar of the waves. Blinding lightning flashes lit the awful gloom. Hail-stones rattled upon porch and roof. Tot clung to Milly, screaming in terror, and even Judy's stout heart qualed.

"Holy Mother! Was there ever anything like this? Oh, the Lord be merciful to me. Don't let me die in my sins without priest or prayer. It must be the end of the world itself. Pray, darlings, pray, pray!" cried the old woman despairingly as the little house rocked and tumbled, and with a shiver of breaking glass

the gay little cupola went down before the wind.

But Milly's pale lips could not shape a word. With her arms tightly clasping her little sister, Judy's wild prayers in her ear, all her thoughts were of the boat—the boat that she felt might be tossing through this mad chaos to its doom.

Oh, she had been mad, surely she had been mad to trust Pip so blindly, so recklessly, to a dullard like Roving Rob.

She would never see her dear little brother again—she would never see him again—the despairing words seemed to echo and re-echo in her ears, deadening all other sounds until suddenly the door shook fiercely on its rattling bolt and she started up with a low cry.

“God have mercy on us! It will be down in another minute. Hold to it, darling, hold to it fast—hold the door!” cried Judy.

“No—no!” was the trembling answer. “There's some one outside. Open, Judy, open quick!” And before the bewildered

old woman could catch her meaning, Milly sprang forward, slipped the straining bolt, and the door burst open to the full fury of the storm.

And staggering over the darkened threshold came a panting, dripping figure, with a slighter one, limp and helpless in his arms.

"Pip! Pip! Rob!" went up the women's startled cry. "Oh, my God, is he dead? Is the boy dead?"

"No," was the quick, hoarse answer, as Rob dropped his unconscious burden on the leather couch. "Not dead—only fainting. Give him this," he drew a flask from his pocket. I dared not stop sooner. Rub him, dry him—he will come to all right."

He staggered back himself as he spoke, slammed and bolted the door against the storm and stood against it spent and shaking while, forgetful of his presence, Milly and Judy gave eager, loving care to the fainting boy.

"Give him another drop—another—in

God's name!" murmured Judy as Milly poured the liquor with trembling hand between Pip's pale lips. "He is taking it down like a man—praise be to the Lord—its putting the life in him. Another sup! Oh, but he's wet and cold as the dead. Here, lad, here," Judy's anxious eye suddenly fell on the watcher at the door. "Don't be standing staring there when we want your help. Stir yourself! Get wood from the kitchen and make a fire in the chimney-place here, so that we can dry and warm the boy. Make a fire."

Rob, who had been looking on like one in a dream, roused at her words.

"A fire," he echoed; "a fire—where—how?—"

"Where!" said Judy, fierce in her impatience and anxiety. "Where! You blockhead? There, of course, there in the chimney-place, before you! Quick now, quick! The wood, I tell ye, the wood before the boy is dead with the wet and cold!"

And obedient to the fierce command,

Rob, still feeling as if he were in a strange dream, stumbled into the kitchen and brought out the wood Judy had piled in the corner, and laid and kindled it according to her direction, the old woman berating him all the while for his awkwardness; for bringing wood and making fire were things that Roving Rob had never done before.

“There now, that will do,” said Judy, as after several smoking efforts the driftwood at last blazed up the big stone chimney, and Pip’s couch was drawn up to the hearth, and he was rubbed and dried and wrapped in soft blankets, while without the storm died away into broken echoes and sobbings as if wind and sea were sorry for their wild, passionate outburst, and praying for pardon and peace.

Though it seemed ages to the pale-faced girl bending so anxiously over her little brother, it was really less than an hour before his blue eyes opened in the pleasant fireside light and warmth, on the dear familiar faces gathered around him.

"Milly, Tot, Judy," he whispered dreamily. "I'm—I'm home again. Home! Rob brought me as he said he would—he brought me—safe home. Where is Rob?"

Where, indeed? In their breathless anxiety for their boy, Milly and Judy had quite forgotten Rob. Only Tot, though subdued to unwonted silence by the terror and excitement, had kept her eyes and ears open.

"Rob has gone," she piped up reproachfully. "Poor Rob was all wet and cold and nearly dead, but nobody cared for him, and now he has gone off all alone."

"Oh, Judy, we ought to have thought of the poor fellow," said Milly. "He must be wet, chilled too. Look out, Judy, perhaps he is not very far. Call him back, Judy. I did not even thank him for saving our boy."

But Judy looked and called in vain.

"It was like him, the fool of a lad that he is," she grumbled. "Never to wait for thanks or pay. There are some old clothes left up in the garret he might have

put on while he dried his own, and I'd have made him a cup of hot coffee as soon as I had time to think of aught but Pip. But he has no head for himself, poor Rob, no head at all. He has gone."

CHAPTER XII

“PARTNERS”

ROB had gone, indeed. Like the guilty interloper he felt himself to be, he had stolen quietly out into the gathering twilight. He dared not wait in this little home of love and trust any longer. He felt too weak and dazed and shaken to meet Milly's staring gaze and answer her gentle voice. He would betray himself—he could not hold to his false name and place, he knew.

His head ached dully; there was a great bruise on his temple where the mast of the *Bouncing Bet* had struck him as it fell; he must find his boat and be off. The storm had passed, though ragged clouds, like the tattered banners of a flying army, still floated in the darkening sky, deepening the gloom of the coming night. And the fierce roar of the sea had died into a murmurous music, like the penitential

chant he had heard in an old-world monastery years ago. He looked up and down the beach, dim with gathering shadows; there was no sign of the boat, there had been no time to moor it when he had leaped ashore with the boy in his arms in the very teeth of the storm. The *Bouncing Bet*, of course, had been swept away.

There was a low whine at his side, a cold nose was thrust in his hand. Don, who had faithfully stalked after his master through all this direful adventure, was telling his sympathy as best he could. "Yes, she's gone, Don; gone, old boy. We're stranded for the night, it seems. I really couldn't expect anything else. Still the tide is out now; she may have caught somewhere up in these shoals and reefs. Stay here, old boy, and keep guard over the shack, Don, till I come back. I'll have a look up the shore. On guard, Don! Watch!"

The dog leaped on him and barked appealingly. "No, Don, you can't come. I heard a whisper this morning that some

jailbird had been hunted down to this beach. You and I will have to drift around awhile yet and watch. So *watch*, Don, while I go take a look up shore for the boat. Watch till I come back!” Don whined again, but his master pointed a commanding hand to the shack, and the dog sprang away obediently to lie down on the darkened porch, while with slow, heavy tread, all unlike his usual springing step, Rob kept up the beach.

The tide was out now; the shore between the Cove and Camp Xavier was a stretch of shoals and reefs, where a drifting boat might easily be stranded, so he strode along peering into the shallow reaches, where the sea seemed to break into the solemn, murmurous chant that haunted him so strangely to-night.

“*Miserere mei, Deus!*” had been the refrain of that cowed choir long ago, and in his throbbing brain the words echoed and re-echoed with dull insistence to the sobbing break of the sea.

“*Miserere mei, Deus! Miserere mei!*”

“Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me!”

The storm, the blow on his temple, nay, this whole “confounded” day, with its echoes and memories and awakenings had upset him, thought Rob irritably, as he wandered on, under the dim light of the still cloud-racked sky, looking for his boat.

He had been a fool—he put a strong adjective before the word—the worst kind of a fool, to begin this masquerade, to steal into this gentle girl’s home under a false name, to learn all the pitiful struggles of her life, its self-sacrifice, its sweet womanly devotion. And Roving Rob almost sickened with self-disgust, as he recalled the low pleading prayers he had overheard Milly breathing above Pip’s pillow, the tender outburst of sisterly love that had reached his ear as he had brought the wood and made the fire at Judy’s bidding, feeling, as he stirred the driftwood into blaze, that his lying presence profaned the tender, holy scene.

If Milly should ever learn, ever guess, who it was that had stolen into the sweet intimacy of her little home, tricked, mocked, deceived her! Roving Rob's cheeks burned in the darkness at the thought.

For she would never understand—never understand all that this glimpse of simple faith and love and childish innocence had been to him—never understand how the prattle of his little shipmates had touched chords of blessed memory that had been silent for years—how the hard crust of selfishness that had gathered over all that was warm and true in his heart had melted to their simple trust. She would never understand that, although it had been only the whim of a world-weary idler that had brought him to rough it among the rude fishermen about the Cove, he had lingered there to watch, to guard, to protect, even as the boy Robbie had watched and guarded the hidden bird's nest long ago.

And what new yet old lessons he had

learned in this watching! How the Light from which he had turned had flashed once more on his idle, careless, wasted life! How his little shipmate's unconscious teachings had pricked his sluggish conscience and wakened his sleeping soul. But all this the gentle girl who had trusted him, as Rob the rough, dull fisherman, would never understand and must never—never—know.

He would put an end to this folly at once, cut loose from it all before he would betray himself, go back to his own world, his own life. He would send a business note in her landlord's name to Miss Parker, telling her that he had learned the place was unsafe, and offering her a more sheltered cottage further down the shore. And he and the little shipmates of this brief ocean dream would part necessarily forever—never—never to meet again. With this grim resolve, growing steadier and stronger in his troubled mind, Roving Rob strode on dully, almost unconsciously, while the fog that had come on

with the night rose in a silvery haze around him, shore and sea vanished in light veiling vaporous mists, through which there came suddenly the clear, sweet sound of a deep-toned bell.

The wanderer paused, startled. Camp Xavier! Surely, Camp Xavier! Had he walked so far? “Night prayers” at Camp Xavier were chiming within his hearing—the *De Profundis* that had always closed the happy day at the stroke of nine—when he was a “Brother’s” boy himself.

Why, he must be miles from the Cove! He must turn back at once.

And as aroused, alert, he cast a quick, searching glance around him he caught sight of something dim and shadowy looming up in the lightening mist, where the sea was singing with low plaint over the shallows.

A broken-masted, stranded boat—the lost *Bouncing Bet*!

He sprang forward where she lay, high and dry upon the shoal, bared by the receding tide, but ere he could put his hand

upon her a dark, slouching figure started out of the shadow and gripped his arm.

"No ye don't," it panted; "no ye don't. Back, or it will be worse for ye. Back, I say; this boat is mine!"

"Yours! You scoundrel! Yours!" cried Rob furiously, wrenching himself free from the other's grasp. "I tell you this is the *Bouncing Bet*, for which I have been searching this hour. *My* boat—*mine!*"

"I don't care whose or what she is," panted the other hoarsely. "It's mine now, *mine!*"

"We're man to man, yet, though I don't know how many are behind ye, but it's *mine*, and I'm off with it right now."

"You are, eh?" answered Rob, rousing into righteous wrath. "Not while I am here to hold my own. You will have to be more of a man than I am, you scoundrel, to make off with my boat under my very eyes."

"You'll have it, then; you'll have it," with a snarl like that of a baited beast the

man was upon him. “Fool that you are! Ye shall have it, man to man—man to man!”

Trained boxer, wrestler, athlete though he was, Roving Rob was no match for the brute strength that met him now. Dazed and weakened by his late experience he went down under a mighty blow—down, down, with the blood gushing in a flood from his nose and mouth, with a blaze of red light before his eyes—down into some blank void where there was neither pain nor fear.

“Ye would have it—ye would have it,” he heard a voice cry out hoarsely and then change into fierce alarm. “God have mercy, I believe I’ve killed him! Ah, the fool, the blind, blundering fool to face me when I was mad like this, to face the fist, the arm of Fighting Smudge.”

“Smudge!” the harsh name echoed dully through the blank in which Roving Rob was lost. Smudge! A faint, shadowy picture floated before his closed eyes, a dim cathedral aisle, two boys walking

side by side to a radiant altar—he and his “partner” Smudge. The picture vanished, and he was dully conscious of a swift, rough hand at his pocket in his breast.

Smudge—desperate, hunted, Smudge was searching for loot—robbing his victim, after the ways of his kind!

The mists had parted above them. Through the rift in the silvered vapors a pale moon looked down upon the pair. It showed Smudge, the pocket-book he snatched from Rob’s breast, a gentleman’s pocket-book, handsome and capacious. There were banknotes in it, letters, cards, and—and something else—a silver medal on a blue ribbon! A hoarse oath burst from the robber’s lips, the pocket-book fell from his shaking hand.

That blue-ribboned medal woke a memory that always stabbed his wild heart to its core. He had worn one, pinned to a new jacket on a wonderful never-to-be-forgotten day long ago. In a sudden horror of remorse, he was thrusting back

all the contents of the pocket-book to return it to its owner, when the bold superscription of a letter caught his quick eye: “Robert Livingston Raynor.”

“Raynor!” cried the startled wretch. “Not him, surely; oh, not him!”

He glanced at another letter, and another, at the cards he held up to the light of the moon. “Robert Livingston Raynor” was the superscription on all alike.

“Wake up, wake up!” he cried, shaking his victim rudely in his fierce, brutal terror. “Tell me yer name, man, for heaven’s sake—yer name—*yer name!*”

The rough jarring touch, the hoarse question stirred the half-conscious brain.

“Raynor!” came the faintly-breathed answer from the blood-stained lips, as even in the heavy dullness of sense and soul, Roving Rob vaguely realized it was now time to claim name and place.

“Robert—Livingston—Raynor—of—of — Westfield — Park. Let — them — know——”

But a fierce cry broke upon the faint, faltered words.

“It’s him! It’s him! The little Robbie that I knew—that I walked with long ago! It’s little Robbie Raynor that I’ve killed here in the dark. What will I do? What will I do? Ah, its rousing, its waking he is—wait and I’ll get a drop of water to take the blood from his face and eyes. I can’t, I can’t leave little Robbie like this—not like this.”

The wounded man’s dull eyes had opened now; he was looking up. Some one was bathing his head, washing away the blood from cheek and brow, sobbing—aye, sobbing over him, hoarsely, brokenly—some one he did not seem to know.

“Who was it?” he wondered confusedly. Who was this fierce, unkempt, unshaven creature bending over him with the tenderness of a woman, the weakness of a child.

“Thanks!” he whispered faintly as the grateful coolness of the water seemed to

clear sight and brain. “You—are—very—very—good——”

“Good is it? Good!” was the choking answer. “Good—when I have killed you! Oh, look up, sir! Look up and speak to me! It’s Smudge that’s talking to ye—mebbie ye don’t mind the Smudge—that—that ye walked pardners with that blessed day long ago. It’s Smudge!”

“Smudge!” Again the picture of the cathedral aisle rose before Robert Livingston Raynor’s closed eyes, and again he looked up with quickening consciousness into his companion’s face. This was the boy who had walked with him, who had knelt beside him; this—this was Smudge!

Into what strange darkness they had wandered—he and Smudge!

“If I had known ye—if I had known ye,” continued the sobbing voice, pouring hoarse hoarse confession into his dulled ear, “I would have died rather than lift my hand; if I had known that it was the Robbie Raynor that in all these black, cursed years I never forgot! Ah, but ye

were the little gentleman to me! Wild young tough that I was, ye were the little friend! But they are hunting me down—they are hunting me down. I was jailed for what I never done, jailed for five years on a lying villain's oath, and when I found my chance I broke loose like a wild thing that breaks its chain. And I made my way to these sands thinking I could get off to a ship that was short of men and would take me in. I haven't had bit or sup for nigh two days. All the devil in me woke when you laid your hand on the boat beyond—the boat that I thought would get me off. I was mad when I struck you down! I was mad when I struck you down!"

"When you struck me down?" Mr. Robert Raynor echoed feebly; "when—you—struck—me—down?"

He was beginning to understand now. This was Smudge who had fought with him for the boat, who had struck him down; Smudge, his old partner of St. John's—who had had no jacket or shoes

for that blessed day. Smudge, who was being hunted down on the dark ways he had been wandering—the wild, dark, rough ways—Smudge, who was sobbing over him now—like the big, bad, broken-hearted boy he was.

“But ye’ll not die, ye’ll not!” Smudge went on. “Keep heart, sir, keep heart; though it gives me back to the jail for life, I’ll be off in the boat up the shore and find a doctor for ye. I’ll be off——”

“No! No! No!” came the clear, steady tone of one accustomed to command, as Mr. Robert Livingston Raynor roused fully to the situation.

“No doctor—no—save yourself, man—save yourself! Take—the boat—take the boat and go!”

“Oh, I can’t, sir, I can’t leave ye. Let them jail me again; let them jail me; what difference does it make now when I’ve brought ye to this. It’s the black, cursed devil’s way I’ve walked these ten years that I must walk to the end.”

“No,” came the slowly gasped words.

“No—old partner—Smudge—no—don’t—give—up—no! Start—straight again—the old way—Father Francis’ way. Here”—the speaker’s hand groped feebly for the pocket-book Smudge had thrust back upon him—“take it—to help—to help you—walk—straight. We’ve both—both strayed—lost our way, Smudge, lost our way.”

“God knows we have,” sobbed Smudge despairingly. “Oh, if He spares you from dying at my hand—if He spares you this night I’ll be another man—I swear it—in His holy sight. I’ll remember—nay, I’ve never forgot the blessed day we walked side by side to the altar. Though it was like the fire of hell to remember, I’ve never forgot.” But he started trembling to his feet as his quick ear caught the sound of approaching voices and footsteps.

“They’re coming!” he panted. “They’ve tracked me, sir! They will help you; they will take care of you now. I’m lost if I stop another minute! Oh, God save and

keep you, for I must be off, I must be off!”

The lights of the pursuing party's lantern glimmered red through the breaking mists, but Robert Raynor lay fighting the dull stupor gathering over brain and sense in silence. He must make no outcry until Smudge—poor, hunted Smudge, his partner of long ago—was out of reach. The darkness was gathering about him again; he was sinking. Help was near, but he must not call—yet.

What was it the waves had been chanting all evening? Their solemn plaint was the last sound that struck his ear: “*Miserere mei, Deus! Miserere mei, Deus.*” “Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me,” they seemed to plead. And then all again was blank.

“Look out, my men; keep together. He is down here, I am sure, but he will fight to the last. Why, hallo! What's this?” The leader of the searching posse recoiled from the prostrate form over which he

had almost stumbled in the uncertain light.

“Thunderation!” he flashed his red lantern over the roughly clad figure into the bruised, blood-stained face. “It’s our man! We’ve got him—whether dead or living I can’t say. It’s Fighting Smudge—down and out!”

CHAPTER XIII

THE LOST SHEEP

IT HAD been a troubled night at Carter's Cove. The excitement of the day had left Milly and her little family nervous and restless.

Don had roused them by starting up from his picket duty on the porch with a piteous howl that Judy declared chilled the blood in her veins to ice.

"It's worse than any Banshee that I ever heard, and I've heard a many. We'll hear of some black luck in the morning I know."

But the morning broke so bright and beautiful that it dispelled all such gruesome fears. The sky was cloudless, the waves dancing and sparkling as if they had never known a storm. Pip, though he slept far into the day, woke rosy and refreshed, as sharp for his late breakfast as any healthy boy should be, and eager to

discuss his exciting adventure in all its detail. Rob was the hero of his tale—Rob who had not “scared” a bit, who had held him tight in his strong arm while the waves swept over the *Bouncing Bet*, the mast shivered, and every moment seemed the two shipmates’ last.

“I tell you, I prayed hard,” added Pip. “Rob told me to pray. I don’t think he knew how.”

“Ah, the poor lad! I don’t suppose he does,” said Judy pitifully. “But the Lord is merciful to them that has the soft heart and the soft head like Rob. There comes the lad in his boat now, and though he is not looking for it, you ought to speak yer thanks, darling, for all he did yesterday for our boy. We forgot poor Rob entirely last night, and he is shy about coming to the house with his betthers, as we know.”

“We forgot him, indeed,” said Milly. “I was too anxious about Pip to think of any one. But we will go meet him and thank him now.”

And the little family hurried down to the beach, Don alone standing still on the porch with pricked ears watchful and doubtful—Don who had been restless and uneasy all morning. For it was not the *Bouncing Bet*, but Uncle Tobe's old boat with its ragged sail and grizzled steersman that was beating slowly to the shore, with its load of green truck that the old negro peddled up and down the beach once or twice a week.

But green truck, even at seaside prices, was of secondary interest this morning. Uncle Tobe, roused out of his usual mud-turtle calm, was bursting with the tidings that he had gathered on his way along the shore.

Milly stood shocked and almost speechless as the old man poured forth his confused story. How Rob—the honest Rob whom she had trusted with her darlings—was a most desprit devil dat had broken jail 'bout five weeks ago and made his way down to dis beach to hide till he could

get off—how de officers had tracked him down and cotched him last night!

“Rob, is it Rob!” cried Judy fiercely. “Why, you black idiot, you’ve got the wrong story entirely. It’s not our Rob at all.”

“It war de man what sailed de *Bouncing Bet*,” declared Uncle Tobe stoutly. “Sandy Briggs seen him. Sandy Briggs ’dentified him. Sandy Briggs said he ’spicioned him from de fust. He didn’t drink or fight nuff to be right. When Sandy Briggs heerd he was tuk he bust open de little cabin whar he hed been libbing and found a bag full of gold watches and rings and things and silk shirts and handkerchiefs and more than three hundred dollars cash money. Whar he got ’em all Sandy Briggs says he don’t know; he must have been out robbing and murdering ebery night.”

“Rob! Our Rob!” cried Pip, who had been listening in speechless dismay to Tobe’s story. “Oh, he couldn’t! He didn’t!”

"Of course he didn't!" said Judy hotly. "I wouldn't believe Sandy Briggs if he swore to the tale on twenty Bibles, old Scotch skinflint that he is. Rob! A soft-hearted innocent like Rob, that had no more sense about money getting than a new-born babe! Rob, it's the devil's own lies they've brought against the poor, friendless lad—gold watches and all!"

"Oh, I can't believe it, I can't!" said Milly, feeling in spite of herself that Sandy, grim old Presbyterian that he was, would not lie so recklessly. "There must be some mistake. He had the best, the kindest face I ever saw."

"Law, missy, ye can't trust to faces," said Uncle Tobe with a solemn shake of his grizzled head. "Dar was ole Marse Jim Denison, dat would kill a nigger quick ez a wink, had a face lak Moses on the Mount. Ye can't trust to faces at all."

"Ye can," said Judy. "Ye can trust to eyes that haven't lost their boy-light, to the mouth that can smile as I've seen that poor lad smiling at Pip and Tot. I'd as

soon believe such lies of Pip himself. And they've taken the poor lad off, you say; they've taken that poor, innocent lad off to jail?"

"To the jail! No!" said Uncle Tobe slowly. "They didn't—they couldn't—he was too nigh dead."

"Dead!" was the sharp, startled echo from his listeners.

"Yes'm; that's how they came to cotch him. He couldn't fight or run no more. They found him lying on the beach nigh dead. Must have fell or struck something in the dark, I reckon, when he heern 'em coming over the sandhills. Word came he was down hyah, on this beach, and to send de posse arter him and get him dead or alive. He was a powerful fighter, dey say, when his blood was up—been in de prize ring. Dey would nebba 'a' got him if he hadn't been nigh dead."

"Ah, God help him! My poor lad! My poor lad!" wailed Judy; "and where is he now?"

"They fotched him to Pete Jackson's

shanty on the P'int," answered Tobe. "One of de sheriff's men is a-watching him, and they've had the doctor down, and——"

"And never a friendly voice or pitying eye near or nigh him! Never a woman's hand—never a holy word or prayer! I'm going to him," said Judy, her dim old eyes flashing into resolve. "I'm going to him, though the sheriff and all his men, bad luck to them, were in my way. He shan't die like a dog while Judy Grogan is to the fore. I am going to nurse him till he draws his last breath!"

"Oh, Judy, dear, yes, go—go," said Milly eagerly. "Uncle Tobe will take you right now. And there's wine and the jelly you made yesterday in the pantry. Take them to him, Judy; take anything we have."

"And take me, too, Judy," cried Pip. "Oh, Milly, let me go with her, let me go to poor Rob."

"Oh, Pip, darling—no," said Milly.

"What could you do for him, my poor, dear boy?"

"Just—just stand by him, whatever he has done," answered Pip, manfully choking back a sob. "Just show him I ain't afraid or ashamed when he's down like this. 'Shipmate' he used to call me, Milly," the boyish voice broke at the name. "I want to stand by my shipmate like he would stand by me."

"And you shall," said Milly impulsively. "Oh, I don't know whether it is wise or prudent, but you shall stand by your shipmate. Go, Pip, go with Judy. Rob saved your life yesterday. Go thank him, bless him for that, let him be what he may."

Stretched upon a rude pallet of straw, pillowed upon a roll of ragged canvas, Robert Livingston Raynor—millionaire, capitalist, traveler, and society man, owner of more land and houses and money than he ever troubled to count, was drifting out of the cloud spaces where for long

hours he had been lost, back to a dim, dreamy consciousness.

Where was he? What had happened? "Smudge!" Again that harsh name echoed dully in his rousing mind, the picture of the cathedral aisle floated into his half-shaped thoughts, again he was walking to a radiant altar side by side with Smudge.

Smudge! The name seemed to bring another meaning he could not place; he opened his eyes and glanced around him at the broken boards of the wall, the low, moulding rafters of the roof. What was he—Robert Livingston Raynor—doing here? Was he Robert Livingston Raynor, indeed, or some one else?

There was a step at his side, a shadow fell across his pillow. "Ah, ye're waking, are ye?" said a gruff voice. "Then ye are to take this." A spoonful of something sharp and stinging was pressed between his lips; he swallowed it mechanically.

"Who are you?" he asked, looking up dully into the coarse bearded face.

"Your guard, my man," was the grim answer. There was a moment's pause. The words had absolutely no meaning for their hearer. But the sharp, stinging stimulant was beginning to do its work.

"I don't—don't—quite understand," said the sick man languidly.

"Mebbe ye will later on. Take it easy now while ye can. Ye've had a close shave and you ain't clear yet."

"Not clear yet"—that was plain; "not clear yet"—but beginning to be. The cloud of vague, shapeless memories was slowly breaking, separating, taking color and form. It was growing plain to Robert Livingston Raynor that he had been hurt somehow—that something had gone very wrong indeed. He put his hand to his head, that he found was swathed heavily in bandages.

The guard, smoking at the open door, started forward at his movement. "You'd best keep quiet," he warned. "That is, if ye want to live. I'm here to watch ye,

and I'll have no tricks. Dead or alive, the law has got ye again, Fighting Smudge!"

Smudge! Fighting Smudge! It was as if a flash of lightning blazed forth in the darkness at the name. The boat—the fight—the hoarse, desperate cry in his ear as he fell—Robert Raynor remembered all. It was Smudge who had done this; Smudge, who had once walked with him up the cathedral aisle—hunted, desperate, maddened Smudge, who had fled with the boat in the darkness—who had left him senseless beside the sea! And the searchers had taken him—Robert Livingston Raynor—for their fugitive. He was lying here wounded, helpless, dying, perhaps, as "Fighting Smudge!" For a moment this astounding situation seemed to stun and bewilder him; then he remembered the cathedral aisle again. When they had walked together long ago, he and Smudge had been the same size, the same build, his own crisp-cut locks and his partner's shock of tousled hair had been of the same tawny hue—when Smudge washed his grimy

face it bore a rugged likeness to "Robbie's" own.

So when they found him last night, bruised, blood-stained, in the shadows the mistake was not so strange. A smile flickered over his face at the thought; the grim joke of it all appealed to his returning sense of humor. They had been partners to the last, he and Smudge. He had taken Smudge's place, turned off the hunters while Smudge escaped. Smudge was off now safe and free to live a better life somewhere—"to remember," as he had promised, that "happy day"—poor Fighting Smudge!

The sick man's eyes closed again; thinking it all out had left him tired and weak. How could he make that dull blockhead smoking at the door understand that he was Robert Livingston Raynor and would like some champagne and ice. And his weary mind began to drift off into dreamland again when voices at the door aroused him.

"You can't do him no good, I tell ye,"

the blockhead was growling to some one without.

"I'm not saying that I can," answered a tone familiar to Robert Raynor; "but I'll do him no harm. If ye've got a soul in ye, man, let us in to the poor lad with a bit of clean linen to put under his sore head and a sup of something cool and sweet for his dying lips. Let us go, in God's name!"

"Go, then," was the reluctant answer. "But he is past your helping, old woman. And no tricks, youngster, whoever you are. I'm watching you both."

But the visitors neither heard nor heeded the grim, suspicious warning. They were in the dark hut, by the low pallet, the foul pillow, where bruised, bloody, with bandaged head and pallid, haggard face—utterly down and out of life's hard battle—lay Roving Rob.

"Judy!" he murmured as the old woman sank on her knees, crooning and wailing like the old maiden mother she was. "Pip, little shipmate, Pip!" He stretched out a

weak, trembling hand. "You've come to—to——"

"To help ye, my poor lad, to help ye," sobbed Judy. "As soon as we heard of the black trouble you were in we came to ye."

"Oh, Rob, dear Rob, yes—yes," added Pip tremulously. "We're all, Milly and all of us, so sorry, Rob. We don't care what you've done, Milly or any of us, we're your friends just the same, Rob, we are your friends just the same."

"Just the same," repeated Rob. "Sure of that, little shipmate?"

"Oh, Rob, dear Rob, yes, yes," was the quavering answer, "just every bit the same. Oh, Rob, I wish I were a man to stand by you and help you. Oh, Rob, we're all—all so sorry—so sorry, Rob," and Pip broke down outright into sobs and tears.

"There, there, don't, don't, little shipmate." Rob stretched out a feeble hand to the sobbing boy. "I'm not worth it, Pip."

"You are, you are," said Judy passionately. "We're not asking what you've done or what brought you to this, my poor lad. We know it's the good, warm, tender heart that beats under it all! And there's One above that knows it, too. He will not be asking too much of ye, my poor lad. He that looked for the straying sheep in the brambles and brought it home. I'm only a poor old ignorant woman and can't talk to ye right of God's mercy, be our sins black and bloody as they may, but there's one out beyond who can. I sent old Tobe up to the camp to bring him to ye, lad. Will ye see him, the good priest, who can bring God's mercy and pardon to ye, lad? Here he is now."

And as she spoke a bent, feeble, white-haired old man stood on the threshold of the cabin and advanced with a low-breathed priestly benediction to the sick man's bed.

"Father Francis!" With a low cry that was almost a sob the boy of long ago stretched out his hand to his old pastor,

smiled up into the pitying face. "You do not know me, Father, I am sure."

"My poor child, no!" was the gentle answer.

"It is Robbie, Father," said the sick man softly, "your old boy Robbie Raynor, your lost sheep."

CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION

IN A little while the truth thus faintly whispered in the good old father's ear was flashing far and wide; in a little while it was known that Mr. Robert Livingston Raynor, who had been roughing it incog., as was his frequent custom on his fishing trips, had been found senseless on the Virginia shore and taken in charge by the authorities. He was suffering from severe injuries still and his condition was most serious.

Mr. Raynor's friends, physician, and lawyer prepared to start to his aid at once. Mr. Raynor's own white-winged racing yacht, lying idle at her wharf, was rapidly made ready for service.

But Mr. Raynor himself lay on the rough pallet that Judy's fresh, clean linen had somewhat improved in a strange, new calm.

There was a great peace in his face as with his hand clasped in his old Father's he looked out of Pete Jackson's cabin window at the setting sun. Whether it would ever rise for him again he did not know, but the voice of the breaking waves reached his ear with a new note in its plaintive cry. Thanks to the mercy for which that chant had seemed to plead last night, all was well. Roving Rob's wandering was over. Father Francis had found his lost lamb and brought him back to the fold.

Brother Mat, who was a master of nursing, as of all other useful things, came over from the camp to stay until Mr. Raynor's friends could reach him, so Judy and Pip were no longer needed. "He wants to see you before you go," said Father Francis, coming out on the sands, where they had been waiting, tearful and bewildered, while Roving Rob made his peace with God.

"It's good-night, little shipmate," said Rob, holding out one hand to Pip, another

to Judy. "Good-night and maybe good-by! I'd like to send a message to your sister. She will think hard things of me, I'm afraid. Tell her I'm not the cad I may seem. Carter's Cove was no place for her—for you. Only—only as Roving Rob—could—I help—protect."

"And you did, lad, you did," sobbed Judy. "Whether it's rogue or gentleman you are, you will always be my own bold, honest lad, that I'd trust to me last breath."

"Good, good old Judy!" murmured the sick man faintly. "But besides—besides—tell my little shipmate how it was, Father."

Father Francis laid his hand gently on Pip's shoulder.

"He wants you to know what you have done for him, my son; how in your simple, boyish goodness you recalled his own happy, innocent past, waked the boy Robbie that still lived in his heart."

"Yes, waked him, Pip, knocked him—with hard truths, little shipmate, into life,"

added Roving Rob faintly. "The sick babies, tenement houses, poor mothers—all that. Whether I live—or die—tell your sister—I'll fix them—all right. I've learned lessons—from you—little ship-mate—and your sister—that I'll never forget."

And this was the message that Pip bore back in Uncle Tobe's boat that evening to the little red-roofed house in the Cove, the message that after the first moment of breathless amazement brought the tears in a pitying flood from Milly's tender eyes.

Mr. Robert Livingston Raynor in the pride of his health, strength, and wealth could never have made things clear to her, but this message from the wounded man, dying, perhaps, in Peter Jackson's cabin, from the lost sheep Father Francis had gathered back into the fold, from the boy of long ago, that had wakened at Pip's simple faith and trust—all this with the quick intuition of a loving heart Milly understood.

It was such a clear understanding that

when, some three weeks later, Robert Livingston Raynor's yacht the *Wanderer* drifted slowly down the coast with a pale, hollow-eyed Roving Rob in white sailor's garb on the deck, anxious to explain and atone, he found no shadow in the joyous welcome of his little shipmate, no cloud of distrust on their sister's sweet face, no spark in the violet eyes.

"I scarcely dared to come," he said, as he took her outstretched hand, "but Father Francis encouraged me with hopes of your mercy." And over the fine face there broke Roving Rob's old winning smile.

"I wanted to tell you and my little shipmates that Raynor's Row is in the hands of the Sanitary Improvement Company, that Raynor's Stores have six Welfare Workers looking after the shirt-makers. And every baby on the block went off for a month's outing at Raynor's farm yesterday."

"You have been busy for a sick man," said Milly, her soft eyes brightening.

"Oh, I am just beginning! There's lots

more work ahead, isn't there, little ship-mate?" he continued, laying his hand affectionately on Pip's shoulder. "I've got to learn, as you told me, 'to steer by the stars.' "

"But you don't need to steer now," said Pip, glancing at the white-sailed yacht, with its uniformed crew.

"Oh, don't I?" laughed Roving Rob lightly. "I'm starting out for deep seas to-morrow. I've come to ask your sister to let me take you with me. The doctor has ordered me for a southern cruise. It will do him good," and the speaker turned eagerly to Milly. The *Wanderer* is snug and safe as hands and care can make her. Will you come aboard and see?"

They all went aboard at his bidding, Milly and Judy, Pip and Tot.

With slow step, for he was still weak, the master of the *Wanderer* took them all over his beautiful boat, that with its tiny cabin, its dainty staterooms, its spotless paint and shining brass was perfect in every detail. A sturdy, bronzed skipper

was just now in command, though usually, as Roving Rob declared, he was his own captain. Don lay stretched on the deck, comfortably at home. And when the *Wanderer* spread her white wings and bore the delighted passengers far out on the sunlit waves beyond the bar, floating like a seagull on the ocean's swell, Milly's doubts and fears were conquered.

Her own time was up at Carter's Cove; she must return to her duties in town. But Pip should go with his shipmate, as he pleaded, for the six weeks' cruise on southern seas, that, as good old Judy declared, would "finish things up entirely and bring their boy back as bold and brave and stout a sailor boy as ever roamed the sea."

"Take me, too!" cried Tot, clinging to her "pirate" with the baby trust that no change of fate or fortune had disturbed in the least. "I want to go sailing with you in this pretty ship, Rob. Take me, too."

"I will," said Rob, as his arm tightened about this small shipmate in a tender clasp.

“Not now, perhaps, little girlie, but I’ll come back and then take you. Meantime I had almost forgotten. Tad!” calling to one of the men, bring that long box out of my cabin to this little lady here.”

Tad brought up the box, whose opening made Tot fairly shriek with a delight that banished every pang of disappointment at her delayed voyage. For within the big box was a handsome Polly Flinders—a glorified Polly Flinders, attired in the very latest Paris fashion, even to watch and bracelet and parasol—a Polly Flinders that rapturously replaced forever the battered, watersoaked lady whose head had vanished hopelessly two weeks before. And Tot’s happiness thus fully assured, Milly and Judy safely back in the little apartment in town, the two shipmates went off together on a cruise that was like a beautiful dream of sunlit seas and smiling skies. They touched at tropic islands, shaded with palms and cocoanut, at quaint old Spanish towns, where this New World’s history began, wandered

through orange groves, feasted on rich, luscious fruits denied to chillier zones, knelt side by side in dim old cathedrals where the Faith had been planted beyond all uprooting before the *Mayflower* touched Plymouth Rock.

And the shipmates, one in his world-wide knowledge, the other in his boyish innocence, grew stronger, sturdier, nearer, and dearer in their friendship every day.

"Oh, Rob," said Pip the last night, as they floated into the starlit home harbor, "we've had such a grand time together, haven't we? You've been just a dear big brother to me. Oh, I wish—I wish you were my brother, Rob—my own real, true brother for good and all."

"Do you?" said Rob in a low, gentle voice. "I've been wishing that same thing, little shipmate—that very same thing."

And as sometimes happens, even out of fairy tales, this double wish came true.

After a while, quite a long while, it seemed to Roving Rob, who had to learn the lesson of patient waiting for what he

wanted most on earth, there was another wonderful day at St. John's, and old Father Francis stood again at a radiant altar white with bridal blossoms and the Robbie of old knelt with another partner at his side—a sweet, starry-eyed partner, who was to walk with him, guiding, helping, loving him until, in the solemn words of Mother Church, “death do ye part.”

So Pip got a big, strong, true brother at last. Tot, with a basket of white roses almost as large as her little self, was flower-girl, and Pip—a square-shouldered, sturdy Pip—gave the bride away, while Judy wept joyfully in the background.

The wedding, quiet as it had been for so notable a personage as Mr. Robert Livingston Raynor, was widely chronicled in the newspapers, at home and abroad, and the usual gifts showered upon the happy pair.

It was nearly three months afterward, and the *Wanderer* had just brought the bride and groom back from a summer voyage across the sea, when a belated gift

arrived bearing a South African postmark. It was a small box of native wood, containing a Rosary, each bead of rough beaten gold. A bit of paper beneath was scrawled: "For your new partner—God bless her! I ain't forgetting. I'm walking straight, hard, honest ways. Smudge."

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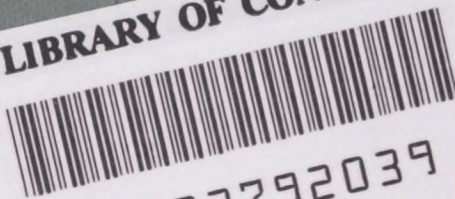
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